GRAVESHAM LOCAL PLAN

Regulation 18 Stage 2 Consultation

GRAVESHAM HERITAGE AND CHARACTER

Background paper

OCTOBER 2020

Delivering a Gravesham to be proud of

Gravesham Borough Council

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an introduction to the heritage and character of the Borough of Gravesham to inform work that is on-going to update the Local Plan. It is not intended to be an exhaustive history of the area rather than an attempt to show how we have got to where we are today. Places inevitably change over time due to a range of different influences and pressures. In this context, it is important to understand what is important in defining the character of our area.

1.1.2. Each generation has to accommodate change because places do not stand still, at times such change is welcome and other times it is not. People also relate to and understand places in different ways and this also changes over time. The way people lived in the past was also very different to today. Buildings and features that survive from the past are therefore important not only because they are an irreplaceable resource but because they provide a reminder of those past lives.

1.1.3. This does not mean that everything must be saved at whatever cost. Change can be a positive thing, allowing us to create new identities and functions for places better suited to the needs of today and tomorrow. However, it is only through appreciating the value of what we have that we can make choices about the sort of place we want Gravesham to be in the future.

1.1.4. This paper should be read in conjunction with a number of other supporting documents, some of which were prepared in support of the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy but which remain relevant today. These include:

- The Gravesham Townscape Assessment (2008) at http://selfservice.gravesham.gov.uk:8081/webdocs/Environment%20and%20Planning/GLP/HER-02_Gravesham_Townscape_Appraisal_June_2008.pdf
- The Gravesham Urban Baseline Study (2010) at http://selfservice.gravesham.gov.uk:8081/webdocs/Environment%20and%20Planning/GLP/HER-03_Urban_Baseline_Study_November_2010.pdf
- The Gravesham Landscape Character Appraisal (2009) at http://selfservice.gravesham.gov.uk:8081/webdocs/Environment%20and%20Planning/GLP/HER-01_Gravesham_Landscape_Character_Assessment_May_2009.pdf
- The Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2016) at https://localplan.gravesham.gov.uk/consult.ti/sareg18/consultationHome .

1.1.5. In addition to the above, Historic England has undertaken a considerable amount of work on the development of Thames Gateway and the Hoo Peninsula in particular – the latter studies extending up to the urban edge of Gravesham across the North Kent Marshes. The following outputs are available:

- Thames Gateway Historic Environment Characterisation Project: final report (2005) at https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/thames-gateway-historic-environment-characterisation-project-final-report/ and

- Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project (2009 – 12) at https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/discover-and-understand/rural-heritage/hoo-peninsula/

1.1.6. Those parts of the urban area of most historic or architectural interest are designated as Conservation Areas, as are the historic cores of a number of the borough's rural settlements. In all, there are 23 Conservation Areas in Gravesham with 11 of these being in the rural area. All of these have had Conservation Area Appraisals prepared for them and a series of Management Plans to maintain their interest and heritage significance, with the documents subject to periodic updating. These Conservation Areas will be referred to in the text below where relevant. All of the Conservation Area appraisals and other documents are available on-line at:

- https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/heritage-and-conservation/conservation-areas

1.1.7. It should be noted that this paper concentrates primarily on those parts of the borough with the most complex history and which have been subject to the most change over time i.e. Gravesend Town Centre and the riverfront. Other areas, such as the remainder of the urban area and the rural settlements are generally treated with a lighter touch because they have been considered to a certain degree in the documents already cited above. These documents will be referred to where relevant and further work will be undertaken on areas where it is considered necessary as work on the Local Plan progresses.

1.1.8. Where change is proposed to accommodate development a short explanation is provided setting out the Council's current thoughts on its approach in relation to heritage and character. It should be noted that for some areas this work is only at an initial stage given further more detailed assessment will be required prior to the submission of the Local Plan for examination.

2. NATIONAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE

2.1.1. National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, February 2019), with supplementary advice on how it should be applied contained in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

2.1.2. There are a number of policy areas where heritage and character are of relevance. In terms of achieving sustainable development, the requirements that we create well-designed places whilst protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment apply. Local Plans are also required to contain strategic policies that secure the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and other green infrastructure.

2.1.3. Chapter 12 of the NPPF contains key policies on design, with an emphasis on understanding the character of areas and how well-designed development that harmonises with it can reinforce and build on sense of place. Whilst policy requires that we make effective use of land and do not stifle innovation, this is not to be at the expense of good design that is grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.

2.1.4. Chapter 15 of the NPPF includes policies on conserving and enhancing the natural environment, including landscapes which in Gravesham contribute significantly to the character of the borough and the setting of rural settlements in particular.

2.1.5. National policy requires that valued landscapes should be protected and enhanced in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan. Whilst there is no longer a policy requirement that the countryside should be preserved for its own sake, its intrinsic character and beauty is still recognised.

2.1.6. This is particularly important in Gravesham, where a large area of countryside to the eastern edge of the borough forms part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AoNB) which stretches from here to the coast and has the highest status of protection similar to a national park. To a large extent the countryside is as much the subject of human intervention as the town. This is recognised in the European Landscape Convention, where 'landscape' is defined 'an area……whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'[1].

2.1.7. Chapter 16 of the NPPF sets out policy on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Heritage assets are considered an irreplaceable resource to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

2.1.8. In this context 'significance' is defined as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be

[1] See https://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape/home The UK signed in the Convention in 2006 and it came into force in 2007.

archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

2.1.9. Designated heritage assets take a number of forms, designated under relevant legislation, including:

- World Heritage Sites
- Scheduled Monuments
- Listed Buildings (Grades 1, II and II*)
- Conservation Areas
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Registered Battlefields
- Protected Wreck Sites

2.1.10. Details of designated heritage assets in Gravesham are available on the Historic England website at https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/. Further information is also available in the following sections of this paper.

2.1.11. In addition, there are other heritage assets that are not formally designated – i.e. non-designated heritage assets. These can include buildings or features of local historic or architectural interest of value to the local community and which contribute to the character of an area.

2.1.12. Within this category lie areas or features of archaeological interest which are not designated Scheduled Monuments. Where these are of equal significance to designated heritage assets, national policy requires that they be treated as being of the same status. The Kent Historic Environment Record (Kent HERS) at https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/SingleResult.aspx?uid=TKE1046 includes useful information on archaeological sites and finds in the borough.

2.1.13. Local Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

2.1.14. The Council is advised to maintain or have access to a historic environment record containing up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in our area and that can be used to:

- assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment; and
- predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future.

2.1.15. The Kent Historic Environment Record (Kent HERS) mentioned above fulfils this role.

2.1.16. The remainder of Chapter 16 of the NPPF deals with the way in which proposals affecting the significance of heritage assets (designated and non-designated) should be considered. The onus is placed on the applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting, with the level of detail provided only being proportionate to an assets importance. Where there is potential for archaeology to be involved, developers are required to submit n appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, an actual field evaluation.

2.1.17. In determining actual planning applications, the Council is required to take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.1.18. In addition, the Council is placed under a legal duty by sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses and pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that a Conservation Area when exercising its planning functions. These duties are generally considered to have been met when applying due process as set out in the policies contained in the NPPF.

2.1.19. National policy requires that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation and that the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

2.1.20. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

- assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional

2.1.21. National policy then goes on to state that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

2.1.22. A lesser test is applied under national policy where the impact of development on a designated heritage asset would result in less than substantial harm. Under these circumstances, any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

2.1.23. This reduces further where it comes to direct or indirect effects on the significance of non-designated heritage assets. In these cases, a balanced judgement is required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

2.1.24. Neither the NPPF or associated Planning Practice Guidance assists in advising what constitutes 'substantial' or 'less than substantial' harm' – although the latter suggests that 'substantial' harm is in general terms a high test (see PPG at Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20190723 at . https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment#designated-heritage-assets)

2.1.25. Historic England provides guidance in this area, notably its publications:

- GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment at https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa2-managing-significance-in-decision-taking/gpa2/
- GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets at https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/

2.1.26. The Council is also advised under national policy not to permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred. It is also advised to require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of heritage assets to be lost in whole or in part in a manner proportionate with their importance.

Whilst this evidence should be made publically available, the ability to make a record should not be taken into account in determining whether such harm is acceptable.

2.1.27. The Council is also advised under national policy to look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to heritage assets (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

2.1.28. National policy applies a degree of flexibility where enabling development is required to secure the future conservation of heritage assets and the Council is advised to assess whether the benefits of a proposal under such circumstances, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a the asset, outweigh the dis-benefits of departing from policy. Once again, Historic England has provided guidance in this area at:

- GPA4: Enabling Development and Heritage Assets at https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa4-enabling-development-heritage-assets/heag294-gpa4-enabling-development-and-heritage-assets/

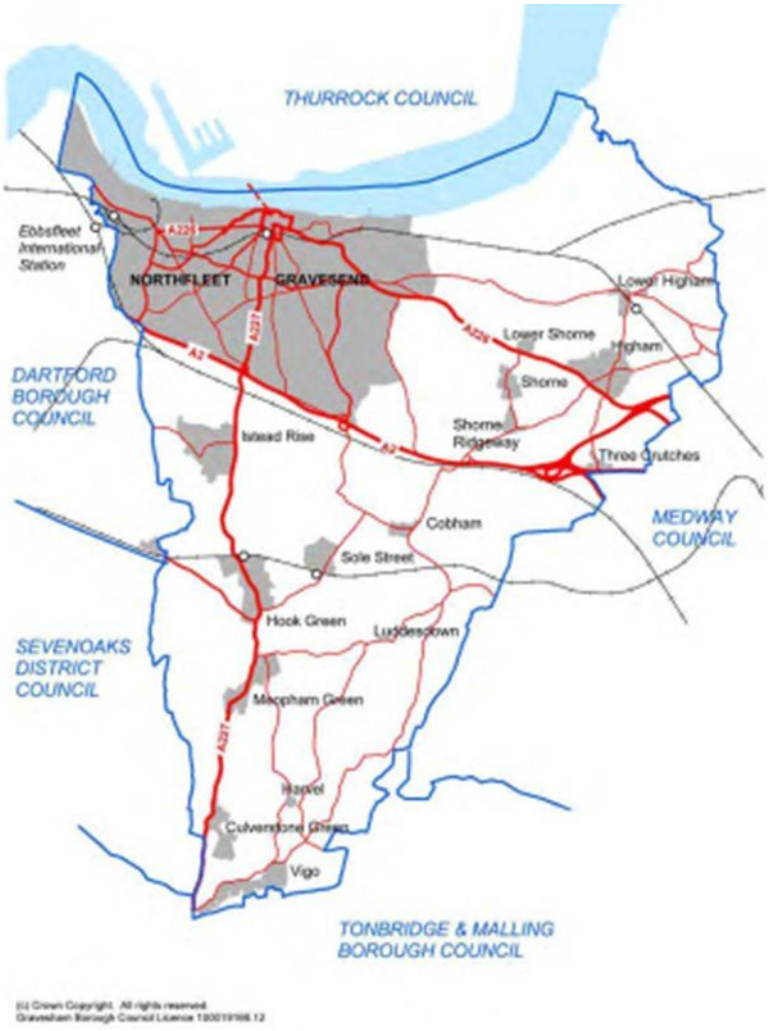
2.1.29. National policy as set out in the NPPF forms the basis of development management policies contained in the emerging Local Plan.

3. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Physical characteristics

3.1.1. Gravesham lies on the southern bank of the River Thames between the Dartford and Medway council areas. It is a second tier local authority within the County of Kent. Medway is a unitary authority distinct from Kent. The main urban area is focused on Gravesend and Northfleet, with the remainder of the area being rural with a number of smaller settlements as shown on the plan below. On the northern shore of the River Thames is the Thurrock unitary authority area which includes the Port of Tilbury.

Fig 1: Location of Gravesham relative to adjoining areas



3.1.2. The Borough of Gravesham only came into being on the 1st April 1974. The creation of Gravesham involved combining the old Gravesend Borough and Northfleet Urban District Councils with a significant portion of what was the old Strood Rural District Council. Most of the rural area continued to have third tier parish Councils, except

for Istead Rise (which was part of the old Northfleet Urban District Council area) and Chalk (which had been subsumed into the old Gravesend Borough in 1934).

3.1.3. In terms of topography, ground levels rise from north to south across the borough towards the crest of the North Downs. Most of the underlying geology is well drained chalk, capped by clays, sand and gravels to various depths. This is particularly the case around Shorne and Cobham where there are quite thick deposits capped with woodland. The riverfront to the east of Gravesend extends eastwards towards the boundary with Medway in the form of wide flat alluvial marshland. Plans showing topography and underlying geology are available at:

- Topography - https://en-gb.topographic-map.com/maps/sm4c/Kent/
- Geology - https://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html

3.1.4. Underlying geology and drainage impacts on soil quality and its suitability for agriculture. Within Gravesham there is a concentration of higher grade soils on chalk lands closer to the river, whilst the marshlands, higher ground capped with clays, and thinner chalk soils higher up on the North Downs are shown as lower quality. A plan showing the distribution of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Class 1, 2 and 3a) is available on line at http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/141047?category=5954148537204736

3.1.5. The main transport network in Gravesham orientates east-west through the northern part of the borough and comprises:

- The A2/M2 dual carriageway trunk road, immediately to the south of the urban area connecting the coast and Medway Towns to the M25 London orbital motorway and Dartford Crossing;
- The A226, which runs from the borough boundary with the Medway Towns through Gravesend town centre and Northfleet then onwards towards Dartford; and
- The North Kent railway line, linking the Medway Towns, Dartford and London with stations at Higham, Gravesend town centre and Northfleet. Gravesend in particular benefits from good passenger services (High Speed 1(HS1), Thameslink and a London Victoria via Sidcup service etc).

3.1.6. In addition, HS1 services from Gravesend also call at Ebbsfleet before passing on to Stratford and London St Pancras. Ebbsfleet is also served by HS1 services from Ashford, Kent to Stratford and St Pancras and Eurostar international services from London to Lille, Paris and Brussels and other destinations (Eurostar services currently suspended due to Covid-19 pandemic at time of writing).

3.1.7. North-south links through the borough are more limited and apart from the A227 Wrotham Road running from Gravesend town centre towards Borough Green are restricted to a network of rural roads of differing quality. Rail services exist on the Medway Towns to London Victoria line, with stations at Sole Street and Meopham.

3.1.8. The River Thames forms the northern edge of the borough remains important as a transport artery, with a number of active wharves serving transport, industrial and

minerals (aggregate) functions. The Port of London Authority also has offices in Gravesend Town Centre and an operational base at Denton Wharf, Mark Lane.

3.1.9. The historical development of the transport network played an important part in the way Gravesham developed in the past and this will be referred to later in this paper where relevant.

3.2. Historic Development

3.2.1. Whilst there is significant evidence of human occupation in Gravesham and adjoining areas during Palaeolithic, Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age times this is primarily archaeological and there is little evidence that this has directly influenced patterns of settlement and what we see on the ground today. The exception to this is likely to be the alignment of ancient tracks and paths (for example Watling Street and Shorne Ridgeway/Hermitage Lane etc) that may date from an earlier period and were followed as convenient or logical routes by subsequent settlers.

3.2.2. There is clearly more evidence for Roman and late Iron Age settlement, particularly in the Springhead/Ebbsfleet area and from archaeology uncovered as a result of projects such as the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (now HS1). There was clearly also Roman settlement and activity in the Chalk area (where a bath house was discovered in the early 1970s)[2] and at Higham/Shorne (where there is evidence of cropmarks, settlement and finds over quite a wide area)[3]. Feature immediately east of the northern end of Thong Lane are also likely to be associated with settlement during the Iron Age.

3.2.3. It is also important to recognise that water levels in the river may have been lower, with more ways of getting across the Thames downstream of what is now Gravesend. The production of salt out on the marshes would also have been a factor as to why people were in the area.[4]

3.2.4. Evidence within the urban area is more sporadic and ephemeral, mainly associated with archaeological work undertaken when sites have been redeveloped. It would be unusual if this was not the case, given it is likely that there was occupation over quite a wide area along the river frontage. This would have especially been the case on higher grade soils suitable for farming and the availability of potable water.

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[2] See https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Pub/ArchCant/Vol.068%20-%201954/068-07.pdf and http://cka.moon-demon.co.uk/KAR040/KAR040_Chalk.htm

[3] See https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/SingleResult.aspx?uid=MKE1521 for early Roman cremation burials and other finds at Higham Saltings.

[4] The Historic England Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project website is useful in providing information on the development of this area and surviving features – see https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/discover-and-understand/rural-heritage/hoo-peninsula/

3.2.5. The extent to which there was continuity of occupation or re-colonisation following the Roman period is difficult to determine. It has been suggested that the area may have been re-colonised from the river with settlement and farming progressively moving inland during the Saxon period. This is partially evidenced by the use of Saxon place name endings in the local area but also by the distribution of main churches and their subsidiaries shortly after the Norman Conquest[5]. There is also archaeological evidence of occupation and settlement during the Saxon period, including the discovery of a watermill in the Ebbsfleet Valley during the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

3.2.6. Gravesend became a primary settlement in the area over time primarily because of its strategic location on the River Thames, where higher and drier ground reaches the river bank and where ships coming to and from the estuary could break their journey between London and the sea. It was also a place where it was relatively easy to cross the river by boat, eventually replacing Higham as the lowest crossing point.

3.2.7. The town must have been relatively important in this respect fairly early in the middle ages given that Edward III is reputed to have built a manor house here in the 1370s on what is now West Street.[6] Milton Chantry to the east is an earlier building, believed to have had its origins as a leper hospital founded on the site in 1189 but becoming a Chantry endowed by Aymer de Valance in 1321.[7]

3.2.8. Following the town having been burnt down in 1381 during the 100 Years War with France, Gravesend watermen were given the exclusive right to ferry passengers to London – the start of what was to become known as the Long Ferry, as opposed to the Short Ferry to Tilbury. This would have further reinforced the importance of Gravesend as the river gateway to London and the rest of the world as overseas territories were acquired.

3.2.9. As such, Gravesend became important in terms of defending the River Thames; as a point of arrival and departure; as a place where navigation on the river was managed and ships piloted; and for the levying of excise and custom duties. This would have been aside from other activities associated with riverside uses such as providing food and storage; brewing; ship repairs and ship building; rope making; and fishing etc. Many of these activities would have continued further upstream on both sides of the river where scattered settlements ran down to the shore.

3.2.10. By the C16th, the basic settlement pattern in Gravesham was established, with the combined parishes of Gravesend and Milton being the main riverside town and with the smaller settlement of Northfleet to the west.

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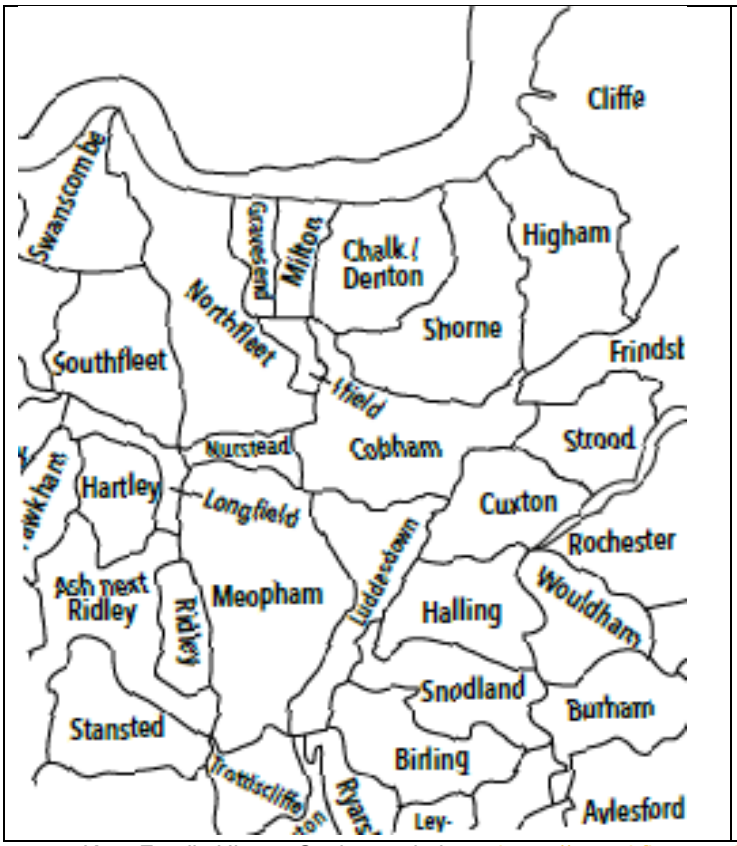
[5] See Alan Everitt – Continuity and Colonisation: The Evolution of the Kentish Settlement (1986).
[6] See https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Pub/ArchCant/Vol.107%20-%201989/107-11.pdf
[7] See http://www.discovergravesham.co.uk/gravesend/the-chantry.html

3.2.11. Whilst the parishes of Gravesend and Milton (which were later to become incorporated) only reached as far south as what is now the A2 Watling Street, Northfleet parish was far more extensive and incorporated what remains largely rural land (apart from Istead Rise) to the south bounded by Southfleet (now in Dartford Borough); Nurstead, Ifield and Cobham.

3.2.12. The remaining parishes of Meopham, Luddesdown, Shorne, and Higham are predominately rural to a greater or lesser extent whilst Denton and parts of Chalk have been absorbed into the Gravesham urban area. The distribution of historic parishes is shown below.

Fig 2: Distribution of historic parishes in Gravesham



Parishes in Gravesham

- Gravesend
- Milton
- Northfleet
- Nurstead
- Meopham
- Luddesdown
- Cobham
- Ifield
- Shorne
- Higham
- Chalk/Denton

Source: Kent Family History Society website at https://www.kfhs.org.uk/_resources/kent-parish-map-v1-3.pdf

3.2.13. The development of settlement patterns since the start of the C19th has focused on those places that previously evolved as outlined above. Whilst there has been significant growth across the borough since that period (with the exception of the more isolated rural settlements or 'closed' parishes) this has been mainly concentrated on Gravesend and Northfleet with their links to the River Thames, the development of industrial employment, and improved road and rail transport linkages.

3.2.14. The attempts to develop Gravesend as a fashionable resort town in the C19th (with associated attractions like Rosherville Gardens at Northfleet) represent an

interesting interlude and was important in terms of how urban layout developed, resulting in the construction of some of the areas most important historic buildings.

3.2.15. The fact that Gravesend was a garrison town for a considerable period of time and a place where London's river was defended should also not be forgotten because this has also clearly left its mark. It not only acted on a constraint on where development could take place but also required supporting infrastructure.

3.2.16. Changes in technology and the response to perceived threats were also to mean that the configuration of the defences changed over time. Ultimately, this evolved in responding to the threat of war in the air and the conversion of the Gravesend East Airport to RAF Gravesend in 1939. This in itself was to ultimately influence where post-war development in Gravesend was to take place.

3.2.17. Significant development within the rural areas only really occurred in the post WWII period, although there had been speculative attempts to promote development prior to this based on proximity to stations at Sole Street and Meopham.

4. GRAVESEND TOWN CENTRE

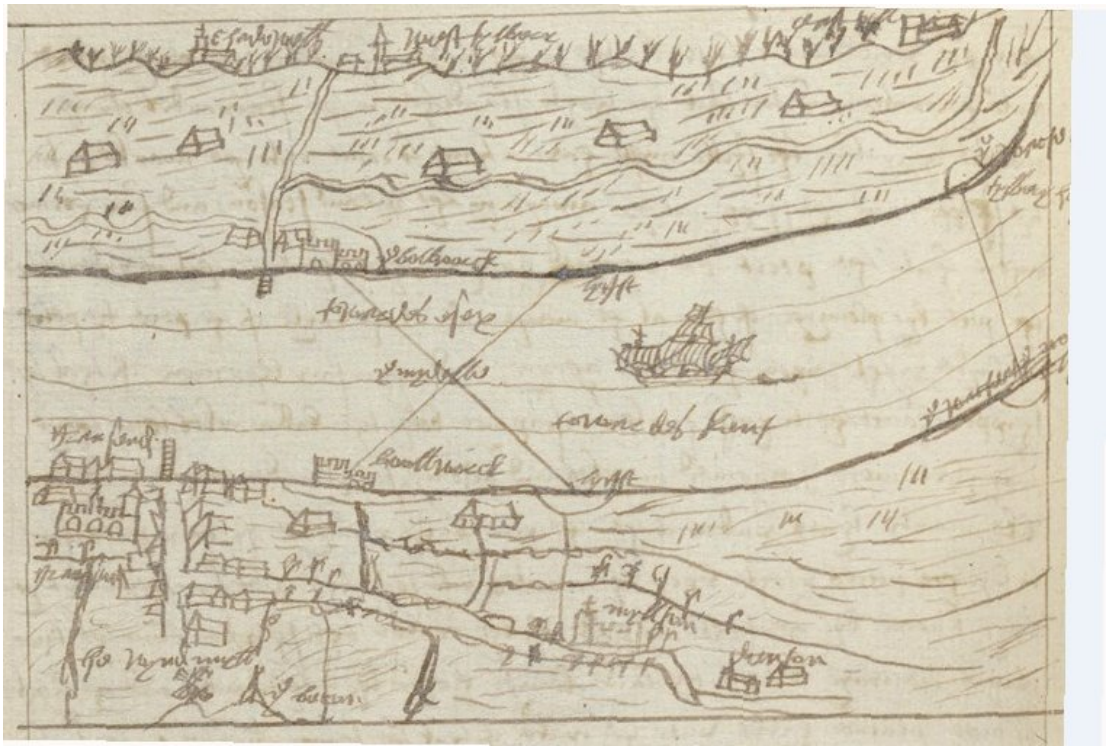
4.1.1. Gravesend effectively comprises the historic parishes of Gravesend and Milton, with the boundary between the two passing down the middle of the High Street and southwards down Windmill Street. It was first granted the status of a borough by Royal Charter in 1562, with this being successively renewed and updated until such time as the third Charter was issued by James II in 1686. This was followed by a further Market Charter in 1693 that allowed markets to be held on Wednesday and Saturday together with an annual fair. This would have basically renewed the previous grants relating to the operation of markets and fairs set out above.

4.1.2. The first town hall was built on the east side of the High Street in 1573, with the market behind[8]. This body would have been responsible for the administration of the town and the collection of market and other tolls until it was replaced by an elected body under the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835.[9]

4.1.3. A major fire in 1727 resulted in the town (including St George's Church) being largely destroyed. A sketch of the town drawn from Windmill Hill in the 1570s shows its general layout at the time, including the position of the Gravesend Blockhouse built in 1539 as part of the coastal defences ordered by Henry VIII and its relationship to Tilbury Fort. Following the 1727 fire, the town appears to have been rebuilt in a similar form to that which existed previously, although it is also clear that a number of buildings survived[10].

[8] See The Gravesend Chronology at http://www.discovergravesham.co.uk/
[9] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Municipal_Corporations_Act_1835
[10] In particular, The Three Daws PH pre-dates the fire. There are also some surviving C17th century buildings opposite Gravesend Old Town Hall that were still subject to Gavelkind tenure at the time of the 1910 Land Tax assessment. The Sailors Bethel in West Street (22/22A) was also considered to be the oldest building in Gravesend until demolished by the church in around 1935.

Fig 3: Sketch of Gravesend and its relationship to Tilbury Fort in the 1570s



Source: British Library on-line image.

4.1.4. Through to the end of the C18th, the main streets in the town would have comprised West Street; East Street; Crooked Lane; High Street; King Street; Queen Street (Milton Backside); and Princes Street (Gravesend Backside). Built development on West Street would have comprised frontage properties to the street itself and courts and alleys leading south to (what is now) Church Street. The area between High Street, Crooked Lane and Queen Street would also have been densely developed as a series of courts and alleys containing a mix of very basic dwellings and commercial uses.

4.1.5. In the early C19th, the town of Gravesend would have been orientated around the river with the main landing place being on the site of the Town Pier at the northern end of the High Street. The turnpike road from Northfleet would have entered the town roughly on the alignment of what is now Clifton Road (the 'Old Main') before passing along West Street and turning up the High Street. Upper St Andrews Gardens was also probably occupied by a number of simple dwellings (Sussex Place), sitting above East Street leading to the Gravesend Blockhouse and the house occupied by the Commanding Officer (later to become extended and form the Clarendon Royal Hotel).

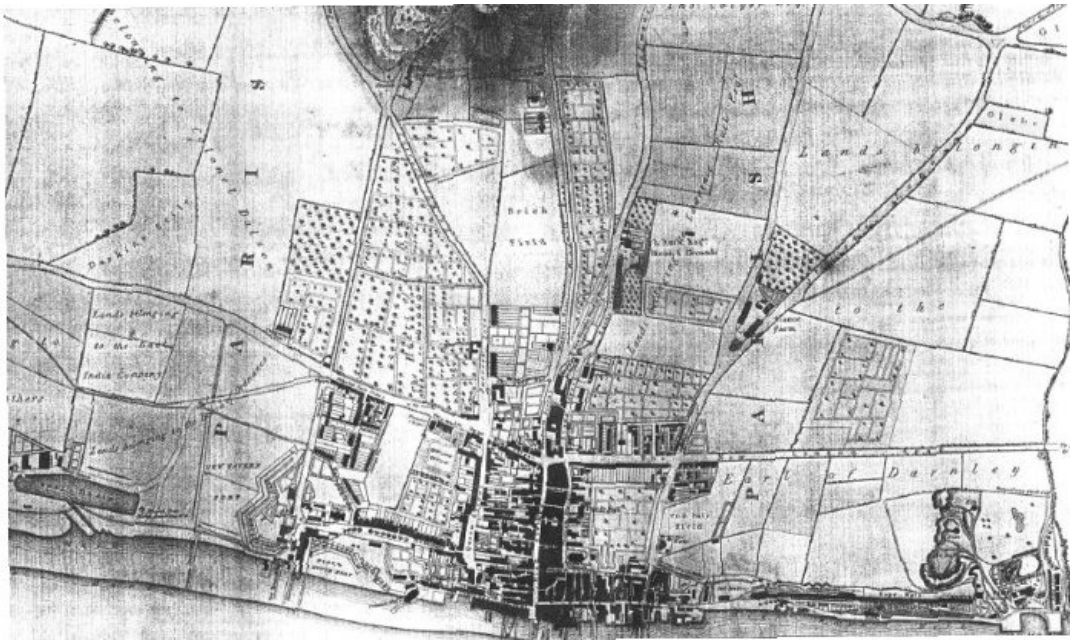
4.1.6. Towards the end of the C18th and into the early C19th, the military defences were extended eastwards from the Blockhouse and became connected to what is now New Tavern Fort. Also during the late 1790s, the Board of Ordinance disposed of land to allow The Terrace to be constructed, linking the eastern side of the town to the area around Milton Chantry/New Tavern Fort where a small area of settlement had previously existed. This was also to become a focus for Customs and Excise activities and a cluster of historic buildings that remain to the present day.

4.1.7. Contemporary with these changes, a speculative venture saw the commencement of construction of the Thames and Medway Canal to link the river at Gravesend with the Medway at Stood. The objective of this was not only to avoid the long and perilous trip around the Hoo Peninsula but to provide a safe and convenient route to the docks at Chatham. Whilst the canal to Higham opened in the early 1800s, the tunnel through to Higham (now used by the railway) was not completed until 1824.

4.1.8. Perhaps the most important change to the road network to occur at this time was the construction of what is now The Overcliffe/New Road in 1800/1801 to divert the main turnpike road from Northfleet further to the south to avoid encroaching chalk quarries. This had been a problem for some time, with the road becoming increasingly treacherous particularly at night and during periods of bad weather.

4.1.9. To the south of New Road, development was more sporadic and limited and much of the land was occupied by brickfield and market gardens. Gravesend was famous for its asparagus and other produce at the time, shipped to London by boat, with the boats bringing back night soil and other forms of manure. A plan from 1826 shows the broad extent of the town at that time.

Fig. 4: Extent of Gravesend in 1826

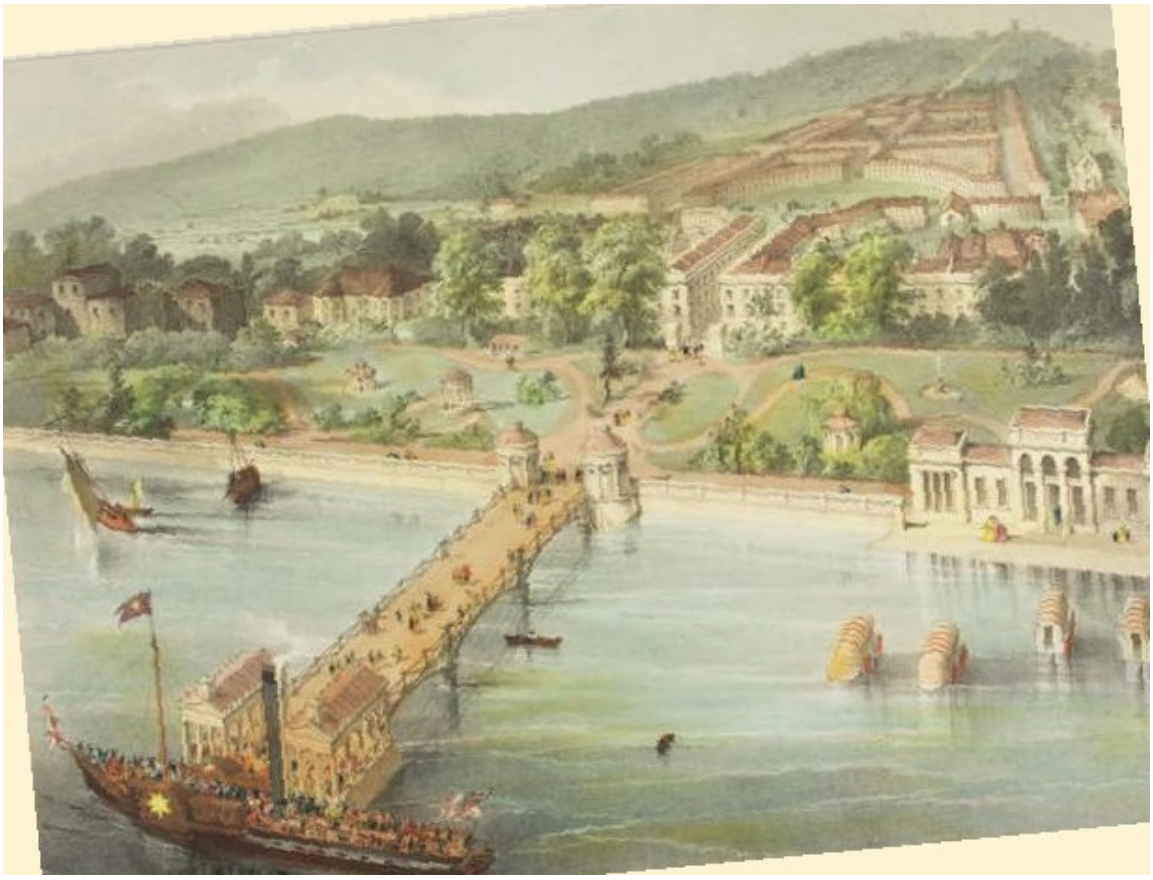


4.1.10. The emergence of Gravesend as a resort town coincided with the growing popularity of sea bathing at the end of the C18th and start of the C19th. Nine sea bathing machines were installed at the Clifton Baths (Clifton Marine Parade) in 1800 and the first regular steam pleasure boat services started from London to Gravesend in around 1815. A separate set of baths had also been established on Albion Parade

4.1.11. A new cast iron pier (Town Pier) designed by William Tierney Clark was subsequently opened in 1834 to serve visiting pleasure boats, to be followed by the Royal Terrace Pier designed by John Baldry Redman in 1844.

4.1.12. In the 1830s there were speculative attempts to create an upmarket ‘new town’ immediately to the east of what was then the historic core of the town centre based on a master plan drawn up by the Brighton architect, Amon Henry Wilds (c.1790 – 1857). This was to become the Milton Park Estate scheme implemented in part from 1837 by the Gravesend Freehold Investment Company, led by James Harmer (1777 – 1853) of Ingress Abbey, Greenhithe.

Fig 5: Image of the Milton Park Estate scheme



4.1.13. The key surviving elements of this scheme are Harmer Street (which punctured The Terrace to provide access to the river and Royal Terrace Pier) and Berkley Crescent. Ornamental gardens were subsequently laid out between the Clarendon Royal Hotel and the Customs House site to a design by the eminent landscape gardener John Claudius Loudon, although these were built on in the late C19th/early C20th.

4.1.14. The town also expanded south of King Street/Milton Road and New Road towards Windmill Hill in the 1840s and between Church Street and the north of New Road around St George’s Church, which up until that time had been surrounded by fields. Development also took place around this time on market garden land south of what is now Clive Road, although this was to be transected by the North Kent railway when it was opened in July 1849. Further development took place to the east of the town in the vicinity of Park Place and Albion Road.

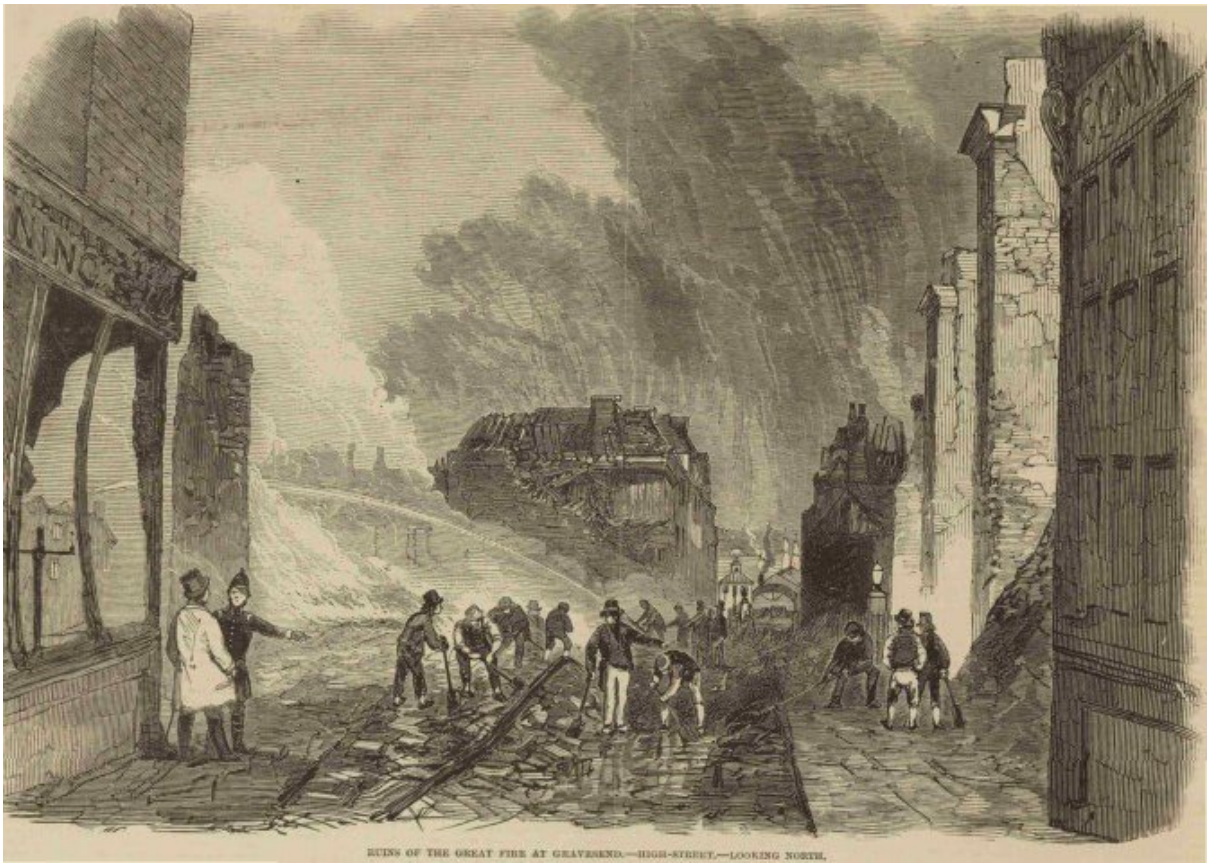
Fig 6: Gravesend in 1869

Source: National Library of Scotland on-line historic maps.

4.1.15. Fire was an on-going problem in Gravesend in the C19th given the layout of the town dominated by narrow courts and alleys behind the main street frontages; the poor construction of buildings and use of timber. There were major fires in West Street in 1844 and 1846, which resulted in most of the area having to be rebuilt. A fire in the High Street in 1847 resulted in the destruction of the Black Horse PH and the creation of Jury Street linking through to Princes Street.

4.1.16. A further fire in 1850 destroyed most of the High Street north of the market, except for a few properties immediately adjoining and opposite the market and at its northern end where a number of buildings erected following the 1727 fire survive. The rebuilding of this area led to the laying out of Bank Street, linking to Queen Street, The Terrace and the southern end of Crooked Lane.

Fig 7: Destruction caused by the Gravesend fire of August 1850



Source: Illustrated London News 17 August 1850

4.1.17. Life would not have been particularly pleasant for the vast majority of people living in the poorer parts of the town. The courts and alleys off West Street and the High Street in particular were characterised by poor, overcrowded and insanitary conditions. These conditions persisted irrespective of the rebuilding that took place. There were also numerous Common Lodging Houses within the town (particularly around Crooked Lane, Queen Street and West Street) accomodating people on a nightly basis in crowded shared rooms. Whilst these were later controlled by bye-laws issued by the Council, they represented some of the poorest form of housing.

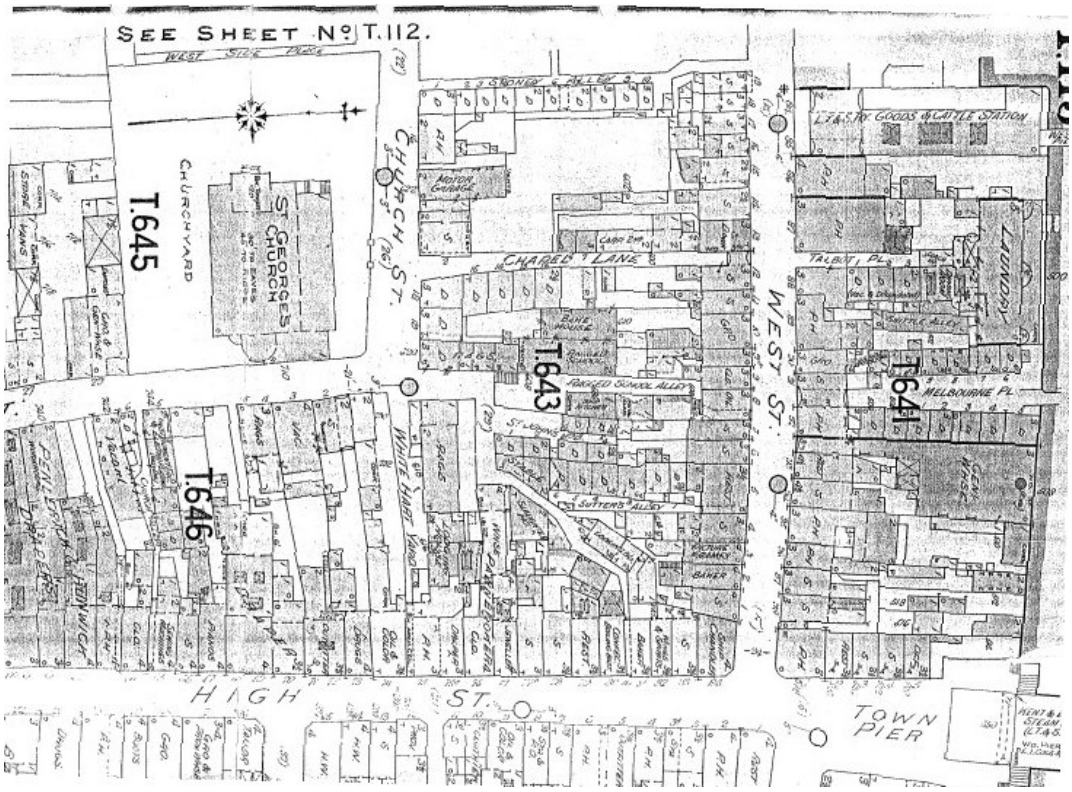
4.1.18. From the late 1860s onwards, the Gravesend Corporation attempted to address issues relating to poor sanitation. This included the closure of some properties, requiring that water be laid on and/or other works to be carried out, and dealing with such things as poorly run slaughter houses that were harmful to health. Powers were given to urban sanitary authorities to buy up, demolish and rebuild 'slum areas under the 1875 Cross Act.[11]

4.1.19. Using these powers, the Council of the time progressively cleared areas of poor housing in and around the town centre. This included land between West Street

[11] The main legislation available at the time was the Artisans' and Labourers, Dwellings Act 1868; the Public Health Act 1875 and the 'Cross Act' or Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act 1875.

and Church Street (now West Street car park) for which a Compulsory Purchase Order was granted by the Ministry of Health in 1935 to build flats – a scheme which did not come to fruition as the war intervened. The width of West Street was also to be increased to 40 feet between building frontages. [12] The extract from a fire insurance plan dated 1908 of the area around St George's Church shows what the area was like at the time.

Fig 8: Area around St George's Church in 1908



4.1.20. Areas continued to be cleared in the immediate pre-war and post war period, predominately in the vicinity of East Street, Crooked Lane and Sussex Place – now Upper St Andrews Gardens. Some buldings of historic interest were also lost as a result of bombing during WWII – notably the Fountain Tavern, Fort House and Tithe Barn at the eastern end of The Terrace and some adjoining C19th terraced town houses in Milton Place.

4.1.21. Following this, clearances continued during the 1960s – including the development that had taken place largely during the 1840s around St George's Church, which left it isolated and vulnerable. At around the same time, the area now forming the Lord Street and Parrock Street car parks were cleared.

4.1.22. The impact of clearances has been particularly pronounced in the historic core of the town centre around the High Street to the north of New Road and at Parrock Street. This is illustrated by the aerial photographs reproduced below. The creation

[12] For papers on this see Medway Archives P156 06 15/43/44

of a town centre one-way system severed the town from the river and introduced heavy traffic flows into historically sensitive areas such as Harmer Street.

Fig 9: Aerial photo of Gravesend north of New Road1940 (Google Earth)

Fig 10: Aerial photo of Gravesend north of New Road 2018 (Google Earth)

Fig 12: Aerial photo of Gravesend around Parrock Street 1940 (Google Earth)

Fig 13: Aerial photo of Gravesend around Parrock Street 2018 (Google Earth)

4.1.23. Whilst a significant amount of urban fabric has been lost in central Gravesend since the war, this does not mean that its essential character as a historic riverside town has diminished. Several parts of the town have been designated as Conservation Areas because of their intrinsic architectural and historic interest. Those in and around the town centre include:

- Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area
- Harmer Street Conservation Area
- High Street Conservation Area
- King Street Conservation Area
- Milton Place Conservation Area
- Queen Street Conservation Area
- Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area

4.1.24. Plans of these Conservation Areas, appraisals and management plans are available at https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/heritage-and-conservation/conservation-areas/conservation-area-appraisals .

4.1.25. In addition to the town centre Conservation Areas, there are also a number of C19th suburban areas on its periphery that have also been designated. These include:

- Darnley Road Conservation Area
- Pelham Road/The Avenue Conservation Area
- Windmill Hill Conservation Area
- The Overcliffe Conservation Area

4.1.26. Once again, plans of these Conservation Areas etc. are available by following the link above.

4.1.27. There are also a number of buildings in the town centre that have been listed given their historic and architectural interest. A gazetteer of these is also provided in the Appendices. Some of these are truly iconic and contribute significantly to the character of the town centre. These include:

- **St George's Church (Grade II*):** Rebuilt following the fire of 1727 to a design by George Sloane. Burial place of Princess Pocahontas, commemorated by a statue in the churchyard (separately listed Grade II). A particularly dominant feature when viewed from the surrounding area and from the river.
- **Old Town Hall (Grade II*):** Built in 1836 to a design by the Brighton architect Amon Henry Wilds in the classical style. The portico was originally surmounted by statues of Minerva, Truth and Justice, with the building once also being occupied by the Borough Police station and magistrates court.
- **Town Pier (Grade II*):** Originally built as a pleasure pier between 1831 – 4 to a design by the engineer William Tierney Clark. It is believed to be the oldest surviving pleasure pier in the world.

4.1.28. In terms of its approach in the town centre, the Council is obliged under national policy to optimise use of previously developed land where it is in good proximity to a range of services and sustainable transport modes. There are a number of under-used sites within the town centre where large areas are dominated by surface car parking.

4.1.29. Looking at the historic development of the town centre and how it has changed over time, it becomes clear that people have been moved out to eradicate poor living conditions with the intention to move people back in under good living conditions, so that they can support a vibrant and growing town.

4.1.30. The town centre has evolved in the past to reflect changing circumstances and events and will continue to evolve in the future in order to ensure a prosperous and sustainable town centre that functions as the heart of our community is sustained.

5. THE RIVERFRONT AND NORTHFLEET

5.1.1. The riverfront to the **east of the town centre**, beyond the Riverside Leisure Area is currently dominated by industrial uses and open storage. Whilst the Canal Basin itself is Grade II Listed (along with the lock and knuckles) those buildings to the north are utilitarian and date from several periods. Older brick buildings fronting Albion Parade appear to have been truncated when more recent steel framed building were erected possibly in the 1930s. A scheme to widen Albion Parade was never fully implemented, although some buildings were set-back. The whole area has a dilapidated appearance and apart from the cobbled surface of Albion Parade itself, evidence that this was once a mixed industrial/residential area (cottages, two public houses and the Albion Baths) in the early to mid C19th is not immediately apparent. Further to the east, some industrial units have been rebuilt on Albion Parade in more recent years. This area has been allocated for redevelopment through the Local Plan.

Fig14: Albion Parade and buildings north of Gravesend Canal Basin (Google Earth)

View down Albion Parade looking west

View across Canal Basin of industrial buildings

5.1.2. Further to the east the remainder of the river frontage and properties north of Norfolk Road are predominately industrial and/or in river related uses (Denton Slipways; PLA; Clubb Aggregates) until such time as the Metropolitan Police Training Centre is reached off Mark Lane. The Thames and Medway Canal has been filled in between the Canal Basin and Mark Lane, following its closure in 1935. A long stretch beyond Mark Lane has been restored and is in water. The C19th Ship and Lobster PH at Mark Lane/Denton Wharf has some historic interest, although not a designated heritage asset.

5.1.3. The Gravesham Townscape Appraisal (2008) defines all of this area, together with similar uses to the south of the railway at North East Gravesend as industrial hinterland. The Canal Basin itself and some of the surrounding area is included in the Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area.

5.1.4. The defining characteristic of the riverfront west of Gravesend Town Centre and onwards towards Northfleet is the significant difference in levels caused by

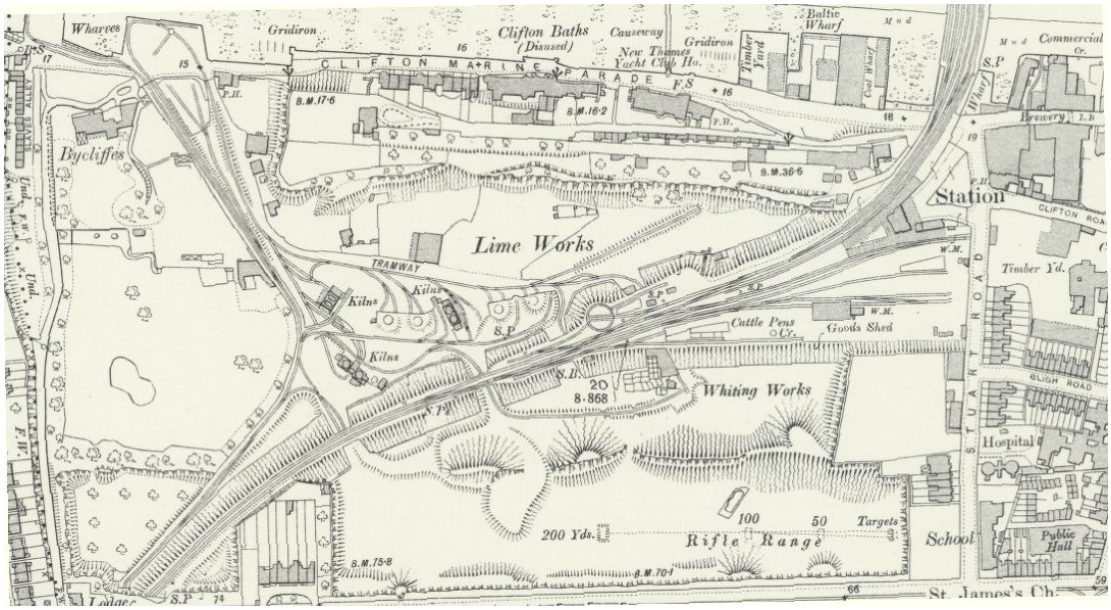
centuries of chalk extraction for ballast and the manufacture of both lime and cement. Many of these quarries would have been dug by hand, with steam navvies only being introduced in the late C19th. Tunnels pierce the chalk spine upon which the former turnpike road now runs (B2175), linking to quarries to the south. Some of these (notably at Thames Way and Rosherville Way) have since been developed residentially at a lower level than their surroundings. Beyond Northfleet at Robins Creek, ground levels fall away to what was once marshland associated with the floodplain of the Ebbsfleet stream (Plough Marsh). The A226 Stonebridge Road here would have once crossed the marsh on a causeway before crossing the stone bridge here before progressing up the hill.

5.1.5. Immediately west of the Gravesend Town Centre lies a former quarry occupied by Asda and the Imperial Retail Park/Industrial Estate. The Gravesham Townscape Appraisal (2008) defines this as being part of the Historic Town Centre Core, although this site does not have that appearance due to being dominated by 1980s retail and industrial buildings, a supermarket and open air car parking. The Overcliffe Conservation Area sits above this at a higher level.

5.1.6. Originally, this area would have functioned as an extension to the historic town centre with a number of frontage properties, the New Thames Yacht Club and the Clifton Baths[13] in prominent positions on Clifton Marine Parade. To the rear of these was a rope walk and a lime works, although the quarry was later transected by the West Street railway line running to the river front. The main part of the site between the river and the railway was subsequently occupied by the Imperial Paper Mills until its demolition in the 1980s, to be replaced by the current development. With the railway becoming redundant in the 1960s, the tunnel was used to provide a road access to what is now Thames Way at the time of this development. Clifton Marine Parade was also severed and re-routed through the development as part of these works.

[13] Clifton Baths originally opened in 1796 but was rebuilt in the elaborate oriental style to a design by Amon Henry Wilds in 1836. This mimicked the Brighton Pavilion, as did his own modest house in Hove.

Fig 15: Plan on Clifton Marine Parade area in 1909



Source: National Library of Scotland on line OS mapping.

5.1.7. Immediately to the west of the above area lies the site of the Rosherville new town, designed as a speculative venture in the 1830s to sit alongside the Rosherville Gardens Pleasure grounds which lay in a former quarry also dug from the late C17th onwards to provide material for lime burning. The Rosher family who lived in Crete Hall on the river frontage owned the works and promoted the venture at the time.

5.1.8. The Gravesham Townscape Appraisal defines the residential area which sits at a higher level here as Victorian and Edwardian suburb, although a significant part of Rosherville to the south of the London Road actually dates from the inter-war period. The Lansdowne Square Conservation Area covers the main frontage properties on the riverfront and the landward side of the former Rosherville Pier, including the Art Deco office building of the former AEI cable works. It was from Rosherville that the ill fated paddle steamer Princess Alice sailed on the 3rd September 1878 before colliding with the collier Bywell Castle at Beckton with the loss of 650 lives.[14]

[14] See https://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/behind-the-scenes/blog/princess-alice-disaster

Fig 16: Illustration of the original scheme for the Rosherville development from the 1830s

Source: London Metropolitan Archives on-line images.

5.1.9. Immediately to the west of Rosherville, the Gravesham Townscape Appraisal (2008) defines the remainder of the riverfront as industrial hinterland. However, this has not always been the case and the area is currently subject to significant change. It is worth therefore providing an outline of how this area developed in the past and what is currently envisaged in the future as part of the Council's adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

5.1.10. The first main land parcel here heading west of Rosherville is identified as **Northfleet Embankment East** in the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy as part of an Opportunity Area containing a number of key development sites. Once again, it takes the form of a deep riverside quarry, with residential development set above to the south. Rosherville Way now leads under the chalk spine to modern residential development in the adjoining quarry linked to Thames Way.

5.1.11. Travelling east to west, the following provides an outline of what was on the site in the C19th and how it is now being developed out:

- **Rosherville Pleasure Gardens (Kent Zoological and Botanical Gardens)** – which opened in 1839 to serve day-trippers from London by boat and subsequently train. Aside from the gardens, there were various venues and amusements here and it was a very popular resort during the Victorian period before effectively closing in 1901. There were attempts to revive the gardens and the Magnet Film Company tried to turn it into early film studios prior to WWI. The gardens were last opened to the public in 1936 before finally closing in 1939, when the land was used for industrial purposes and the expansion of the AEI cable works that had already opened on the site of Crete Hall (initially

Henley's in 1903). Some features remain that have been listed for the architectural or historic interest and the tunnels under the cliffs used as air raid shelters during WWII are an important non-designated heritage asset. The works have since been demolished and a major housing scheme is being brought forward by KeepMoat (ref EDC 19/0049 for 598 residential units and other uses). As a result of this, the alignment of Crete Hall Road through the area has been changed and ground levels raised to reduce flood risk.

- **Red Lion Cement Works (1896 – 1922) –** Owned by Alfred Tolhurst and later the British Portland Cement Manufacturers, this was a relatively minor works that did not progress to the use of rotary kilns[15]. The smaller Imperial Cement Works (in the same ownership) lay adjacent, alongside a small dockyard used in WWI for the construction of concrete barges and WWI parts of the Maunsell Sea Forts and Mulberry Harbours. Following closure, the Red Lion site lay empty for many years before being occupied by Northfleet Power Station in the 1950s. This was subsequently demolished with the site now being occupied by Stema's Red Lion Wharf aggregates import facility and the Berkley Homes modular housing manufacturing plant. The quarry to the south across Crete Hall Road was originally occupied by Tolhurst's whiting works but was later used as a coal store (later oil) to supply Northfleet Power Station. This area has since been occupied by a Lidl distribution warehouse.

- **Pilcher's Northfleet Dockyard (1788 – 1860) –** Although a major dockyard producing ships for both the Royal Navy, East India Company and other customers, it had a chequered history and was subject to intermittent closures. When it did close in 1860s, there were plans to construct a complex of docks on the site linked to the railway but this scheme never came to fruition. Nothing remains of the dockyard above ground although there may be archaeology associated with the 500' x 74' dry dock constructed on site in 1846. To the south of the dockyard, across Crete Hall Road there was a brickworks established in 1878. This was later taken over by the Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers in 1900. All of this part of Northfleet Embankment East was subsequently occupied by paper/tissue mills (Bowaters[16]/Bowater Scott/Kimberley Clark) as it continues to this day.

- **Residential Areas –** Historically, the western end of Northfleet Embankment East was not purely industrial, as there were residential enclaves at the northern end of Granby Road on the riverside and opposite the dockyard gates at Portland Road. These areas can be identified on the plan below.

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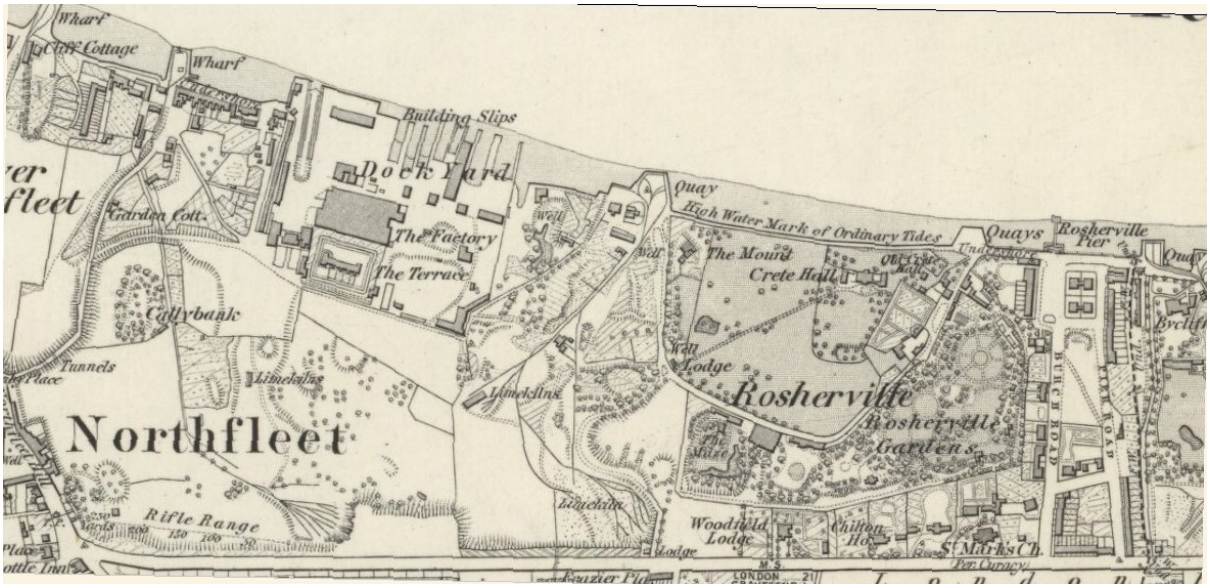
[15] It was producing around 1,100 tons of cement a week using chamber kilns in 1907 – see https://www.cementkilns.co.uk/cement_kiln_red_lion.html

https://www.cementkilns.co.uk/cement_kiln_robins.html

[16] Bowaters purchased the site in 1914 but the first mill was not built until 1924/5.

Fig 17: Northfleet Embankment East in 1863



Source: National Library of Scotland on line OS mapping.

5.1.12. To better understand how the character of Northfleet Embankment East has changed in more recent times, aerial photos of the area from 1940 onwards are provided on the following page.

Fig 18: Northfleet Embankment East in 1960 and 2019 (Google Earth)

NB. Northfleet Power Station (1950s) can be seen in the centre of the photograph with the AEI Cable Works to the right and the Bowater paper mill to the left.

NB: Berkley Homes modular housing factory and Red Lion Wharf (aggregates) now on site of former Northfleet Power Station, with Lidl distribution warehouse to south on site of coal store. Kimberley Clark mill (tissue) and store/pulp stacks/effluent plant to left, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation housing site to right on former cable works/Rosherville Gardens etc.

5.1.13. Immediately to the west of Granby Road (now downgraded to pedestrian and cycle route) and running through to Grove Road lies **Northfleet Embankment West** also identified through the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) as part of an Opportunity Area containing a number of key development sites.

5.1.14. The majority of this area comprises deep chalk quarries interested by paths and roads which lead down to the river's edge through former industrial sites. The Hill at Northfleet sits above the eastern end of Northfleet Embankment West and is designated as a Conservation Area. This contains the Parish Church dedicated to St Botolph (Grade I listed) and the C20th Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Assumption (Grade II* by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott) along with a number of other listed buildings.

5.1.15. A car park at the centre of The Hill outside the gates to St Botolphs Church is believed to have been the original market place. The road to Gravesend from here would have originally formed a continuation of Northfleet High Street until such time as it was diverted in 1800/01 along the safer route to the south that forms London Road and The Overcliffe. The coach to Gravesend, Rochester and Dover would have taken Dover Road and Old Road (the Old London Road) up until that point.

5.1.16. To the west along Northfleet High Street stood the Hive House Estate. Hive Lane once ran down to the riverside at The Creek but was diverted in the 1790s to avoid the property. This now takes the form of College Road. Most of this area was developed out as industrial workers' housing in the C19th, to accommodate those employed in the nearby cement works.

5.1.17. The Factory Club building on the High Street (Grade II listed) was built in 1778 by the cement manufacturer Thomas Bevan as a meeting hall and recreational facility for his workers. To the west lay the main part of the High Street with shops serving the local area. At the junction of College Road with Stonebridge Hill stood the main gate to Huggens College, a group of almshouses built by the Sittingbourne brick manufacturer, John Huggens in 1847.

5.1.18. The majority of this C19th development was demolished in the 1960s by the Northfleet Urban District Council and rebuilt in a contemporary style. Huggens College was also rebuilt in 1968 as a complex of retirement bungalows in a walled enclosure, adjoining high density council flats at Wallis Park built at the same time. The loss of the old Huggens College buildings resulted in the demolition of the chapel with its tall spire, which was an important local landmark when entering Northfleet from the west.

5.1.19. The Gravesham Townscape Appraisal (2008) includes a section on Northfleet High Street identify key features contribution to its current character.

5.1.20. Grove Road runs from the foot of Stonebridge Hill to Robins Creek, connecting to the Northern end of College Road and then onwards as a short stretch of road/footpath connecting through to Hive Lane. Whilst this area is now entirely industrial with a run-down appearance, it was once a thriving riverside community on the banks of the Thames. East India Company ships would obtain provisions

here, with moorings set out on the east side of the Swanscombe Peninsula in the vicinity of what is now the Britannia Lead Works with officers staying at The India Arms (demolished in the 1970s) on The Shore.

5.1.21. The area around Robins Creek is of particular historic significance due to potential archaeology associated with the medieval watermill there owned by the Archbishops and Canterbury, which was later converted by Parker and Wyatt for the manufacture of 'Roman Cement' in 1796. 'Roman Cement' was made from naturally occurring cement stones dredged from the estuary and used predominantly as a render. The works were taken over in the 1840s by Robins, Aspdin and Co, with Aspdin having discovered the means of producing 'Portland Cement' in 1843. One of the original bottle kilns (no 12 kiln from the 1860s) used for the production of 'Portland Cement' at the Robins Works (Aspdin left in 1851) survives on site and has been designated a Scheduled Monument. The whole site therefore has potential archaeological interest in terms of the early development of the cement industry.

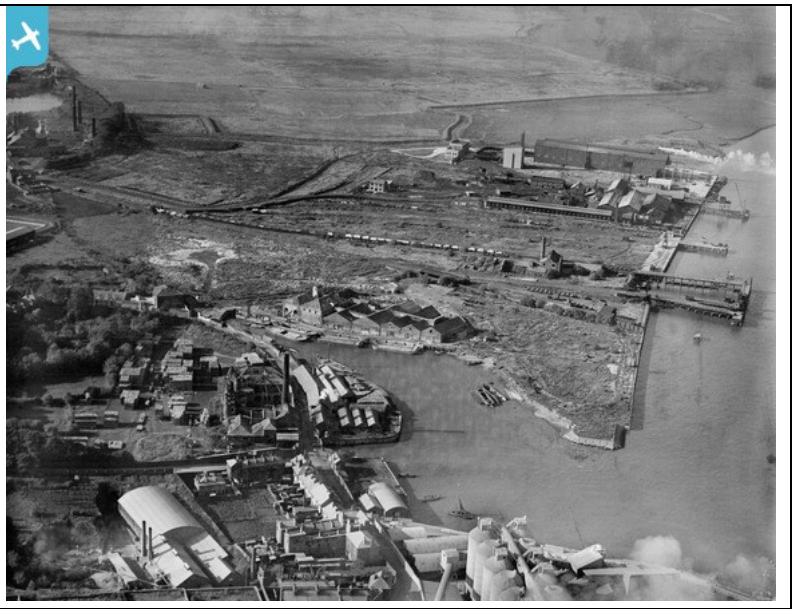
5.1.22. To the east of College Road, the riverfront became the location of several different cement works over time, with the most important of these being Knight, Bevan and Sturge (1853 – 1900, when it formed part of the Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers combine). The works was subsequently rebuilt in the 1920s and again in the 1960s as the largest wet process cement works in Europe (Blue Circle Northfleet Works). The Robins Works closed in around 1909/10 and the modern Northfleet Works in 2008. The latter has now been demolished, with the site occupied by a cement import facility, the site also benefits from a planning permission to develop a Bulk Aggregates Import Terminal (BAIT).

5.1.23. The remainder of the site has outline planning permission for mixed-use development, including industrial/commercial at the lower level adjoining the BAIT and in the connected Church Path and Vineyard Pits, with residential development leading down College Road to the riverside (Ref EDC/16/004 – 532 units). The Ebbsfleet Development Corporation is also taking forward proposals for redevelopment around Robins Creek on the site of the former cement works and these have been the subject of EIA Scoping given the location of the site and the sensitivity of heritage assets (See EDC/20/0099).

5.1.24. Images relating to the development of the area and the Robins Cement Works site follow.

Fig 19: Robins Cement Works site, Grove Road

Bottle kiln Scheduled Monument



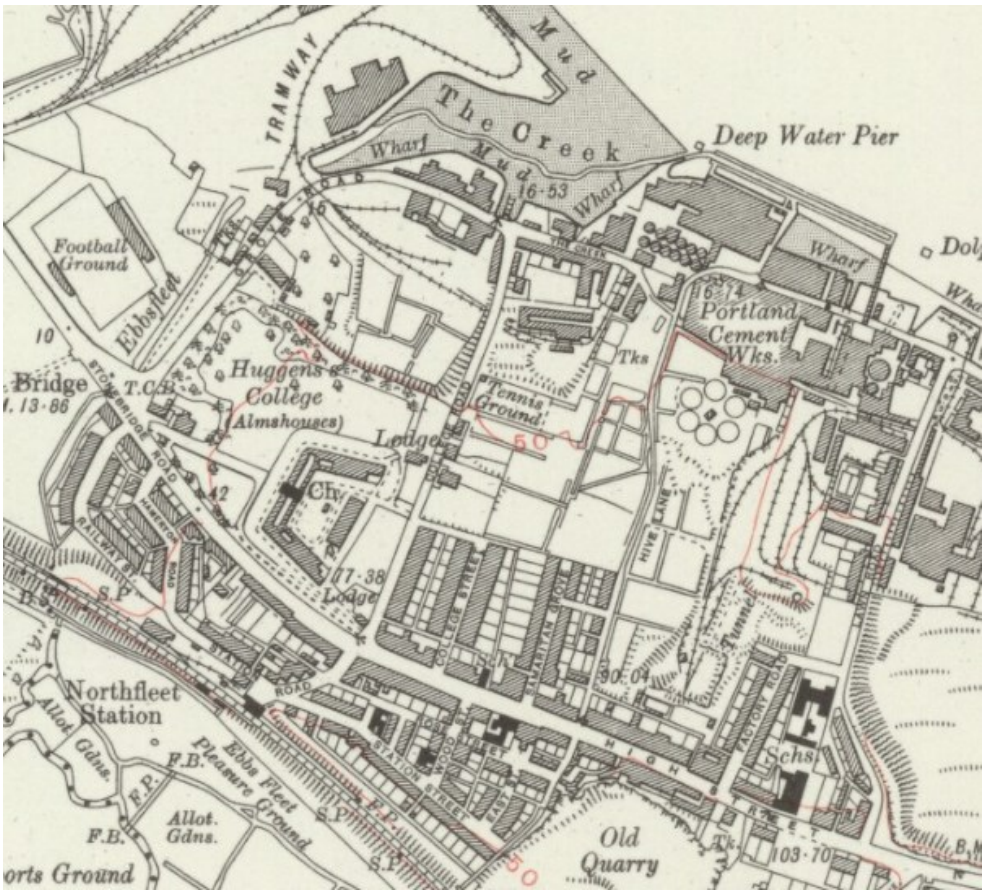
Robins Creek 1932 – parts of works still present

Source of aerial photo: Historic England – Britain from above.

Fig 20: Northfleet Embankment West (1863) Robins Works and Knight, Bevan and Sturge Works shown.

Source: National Library Scotland on-line mapping.

Fig 21: Northfleet Embankment West (1934) with new cement works from 1920s in place. Former Robins Works buildings still shown.



Source: National Library Scotland on-line mapping.

Figure 22: Northfleet Embankment West (2006, Google Earth) prior to closure of Northfleet Works constructed in the late 1960s.

5.1.25. The **remainder of the riverside** moving west is primarily industrial in character and forms part of the Swanscombe Peninsula and Northfleet Embankment Opportunity Area in the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2014). Swanscombe Peninsula is subject to proposals for a major theme park and leisure facility known as London Resort. Under current proposals a significant amount of greenspace would be created on the peninsula between the resort and development in Gravesham that would result in environmental improvement but not fundamentally alter the character of the Northfleet side of the proposal.[17]

5.1.26. The remaining area close to Northfleet that is likely to be subject to a change in character through development pressure is the **Ebbsfleet Valley** in the vicinity of the international/domestic station. The part of the site in Gravesham is known as Northfleet Rise Quarter adjacent to Thames Way. Springhead Quarter which also forms Gravesham's part of Ebbsfleet, is now largely built out and has recently been connected to the international/domestic station by a recently constructed road bridge.

5.1.27. In terms of the its approach to the riverside and at Northfleet, the Council is once again obliged under national policy to optimise use of previously developed land where it is in good proximity to a range of services and sustainable transport modes. However, in the case of the riverside this needs to also take into account the need to maintain employment opportunities and access to he commercial riverside. Many of our wharves are safeguarded under existing adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) policy CS07 or the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan. In addition, policies set out in the emerging South East Inshore Marine Plan apply.

[17] For information on London Resort see the promoter's website at https://londonresort.info/

6. REMAINDER OF THE URBAN AREA

6.1.1. Apart from the key site allocated under the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014) and being developed out at Coldharbour Road/Wrotham Road, there have been no further major strategic sites identified within the remainder of the urban area in the adopted Local Plan.

6.1.2. Within the remainder of the urban area, heritage assets tend to be more dispersed than in the town centre reflecting the way it has developed over time. The exception to this is where older patterns of settlement or buildings associated with a more rural past have been incorporated into the expanding urban areas. This has resulted in some interesting anomalies, such as the early C18th Parrock Hall (Grade II listed) which has been converted into flats and now makes up numbers 4 – 11 Joy Road, Gravesend.

6.1.3. To provide an idea of how much parts of what are now urban have changed from their rural origins, the late 1790s plan reproduced below shows the area southwards from Northfleet Embankment East and Gravesend Town Centre.

Fig 23: Northfleet south of The Hill in late 1790s

Source: British Library on-line images at http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/n/002osd00000027bu00447000.html says the plan is from 1805 but is obviously earlier as London Road/The Overcliffe were built in 1800/01.

6.1.4. In considering the impact of proposals on heritage assets, including development within their settings that may affect significance, the Council will continue to apply national policy weighing the level of harm (i.e. substantial or less than substantial)

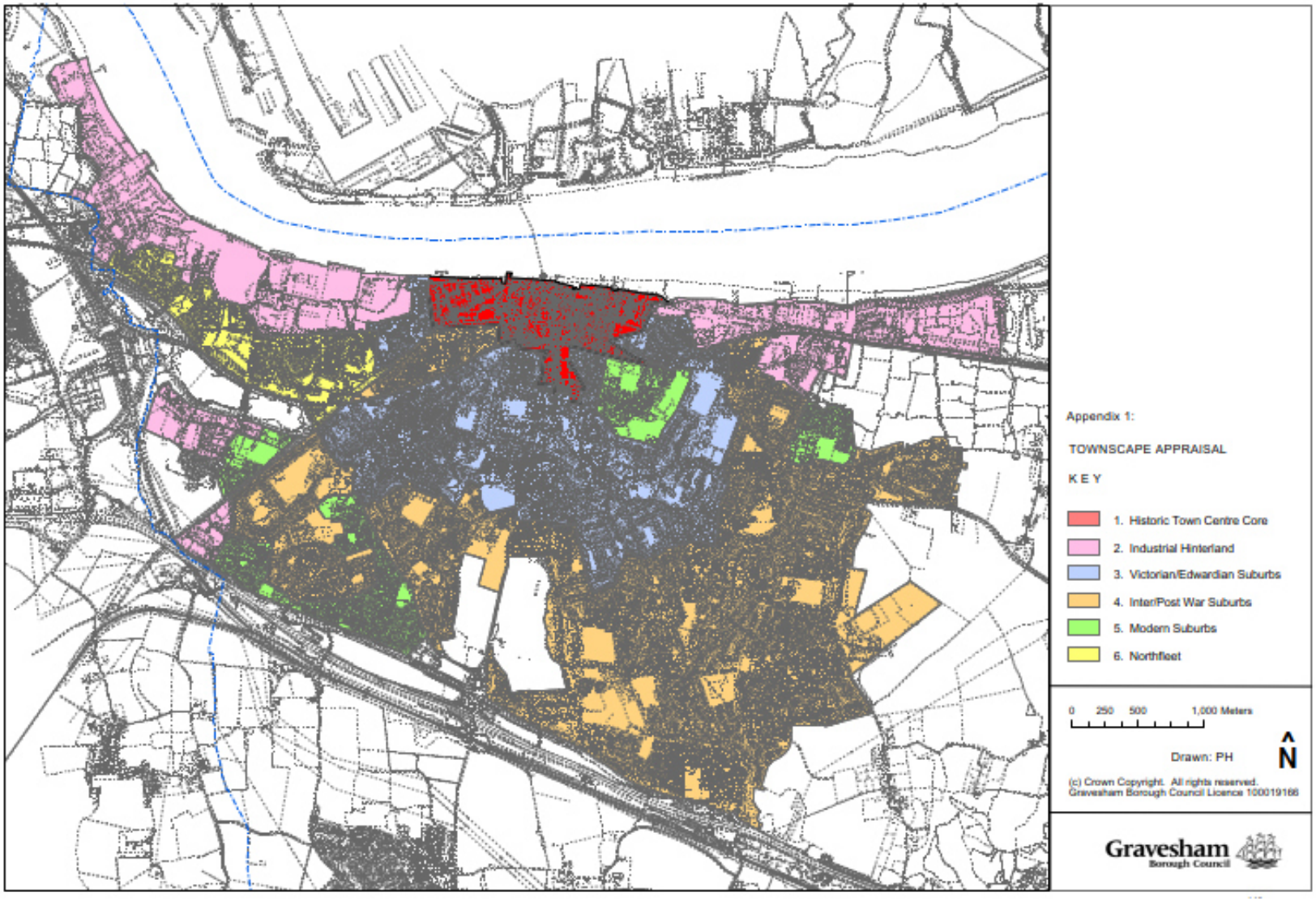
against the heritage value of the asset. The requirement to do so is built into development management policies set out in the emerging Local Plan.

6.1.5. Another effect of inter and post war urbanisation has been the loss in some instances of the earlier pattern of rural roads and lanes and their replacement by new ones and more formal layouts.

6.1.6. This occurred in Northfleet, where Hog Lane originally ran diagonally from its junction with Watling Street in a north-east direction to meet with New House lane at Coldharbour Road. Similarly, the original alignment of Forge Lane, Chalk through to what is now Valley Drive has disappeared, replaced by Valley Drive running along the bottom of the valley in the 1930s – 40s. The original road from Gravesend via Whitehill Lane to Thong and onwards to Cobham Hall has also gone, perhaps now only reflected in the alignment of footpaths NG11, NS169 and NS167 which join Thong Lane opposite Cheneys Cottages.

6.1.7. The Gravesham Townscape Appraisal (2008) provides a detailed assessment of the character of the urban area, subdividing it into Victorian/Edwardian Suburbs; Inter and Post War Suburbs; and Modern Suburbia. A plan detailing the distribution of the various character areas reproduced on the following page. This shows the outward growth of the urban area over time.

Fig 24: Plan Detailing Urban Character Areas from the Gravesham Townscape Appraisal (2008)



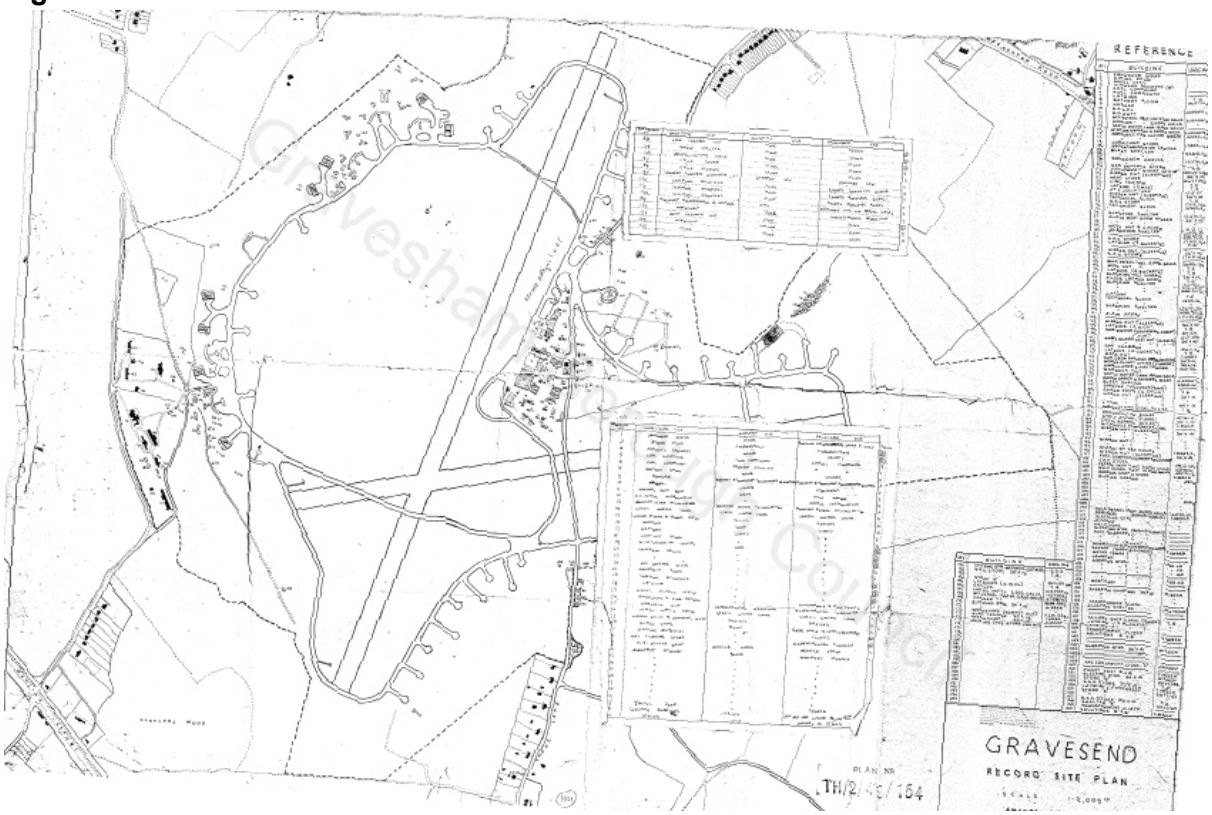
6.1.8. One result of the urban expansion to the east of Valley Drive to create the Riverview Park Estate from the late 1950s onwards was the loss of the London East Airport, used during WWII as RAF Gravesend.

6.1.9. Whilst this only came into being in the 1930s as a commercial airport and was the base for a number of record breaking flights, it was significantly expanded under RAF control and had two long grass runways and associated support infrastructure. The runways were sufficiently long to accommodate heavy bombers on their return should they need to land in an emergency, although it was used primarily as a fighter station, initially attached to Biggin Hill.

6.1.10. Very little now remains of the airport, with the main features being a tarmac dispersal road to the south of Riverview Park; two houses on Thong Lane that appear to have been used during the war as a headquarters building; and an outbuilding now used for agricultural storage.

6.1.11. The reason for including a plan below is for information given it falls within the area affected by the proposed Lower Thames Crossing discussed further in the next section. The houses forming part of the 1920s London County Council smallholdings scheme (Homes for Heroes) can be seen in the bottom centre of the plan.

Fig 25: Plan of RAF Gravesend in the late 1940s



Source: GBC 1949 planning application by Essex Aero for alternative uses of airport buildings. Original plan is from an RAF drawing of the airfield.

7. THE RURAL AREA

7.1.1. The majority of the Borough of Gravesham is currently designated as Green Belt, with much of this also falling within the Kent Downs AoNB or identified for its high nature conservation value (SPA, Ramsar/SSSI) . Within this area, a number of rural settlements are identified as 'inset' from the Green Belt in the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014). Some of these have at their core parts of the original historic settlements designated as Conservation Areas because of their heritage values. The most significant of these is probably Cobham Village, with its links to Cobham Hall and the associated estate.

7.1.2. The Gravesham Landscape Character Appraisal (2009) at http://selfservice.gravesham.gov.uk:8081/webdocs/Environment%20and%20Planning/GLP/HER-01_Gravesham_Landscape_Character_Assessment_May_2009.pdf divides the rural area and some undeveloped parts of the urban area up into 11 landscape character areas.

7.1.3. Following a detailed analysis of each landscape character area, a description of each is then provided and recommendations made on the approach to be taken to each based on condition and sensitivity .

7.1.4. The Gravesham Landscape Character Appraisal (2009) makes it clear that although conclusions have been reached for each area in terms of possible actions and approach, it does not seek to rank one character area against another. Neither is its purpose to identify in detail areas which may be suitable for development, rather to offer guidance to both the local planning authority and developers when deciding the type and scale of development that may be appropriate whilst respecting the character of the landscape. This is separate from any consideration in relation to Green Belt, heritage or other planning consideration.

7.1.5. The range of actions derived from the above matrix are:

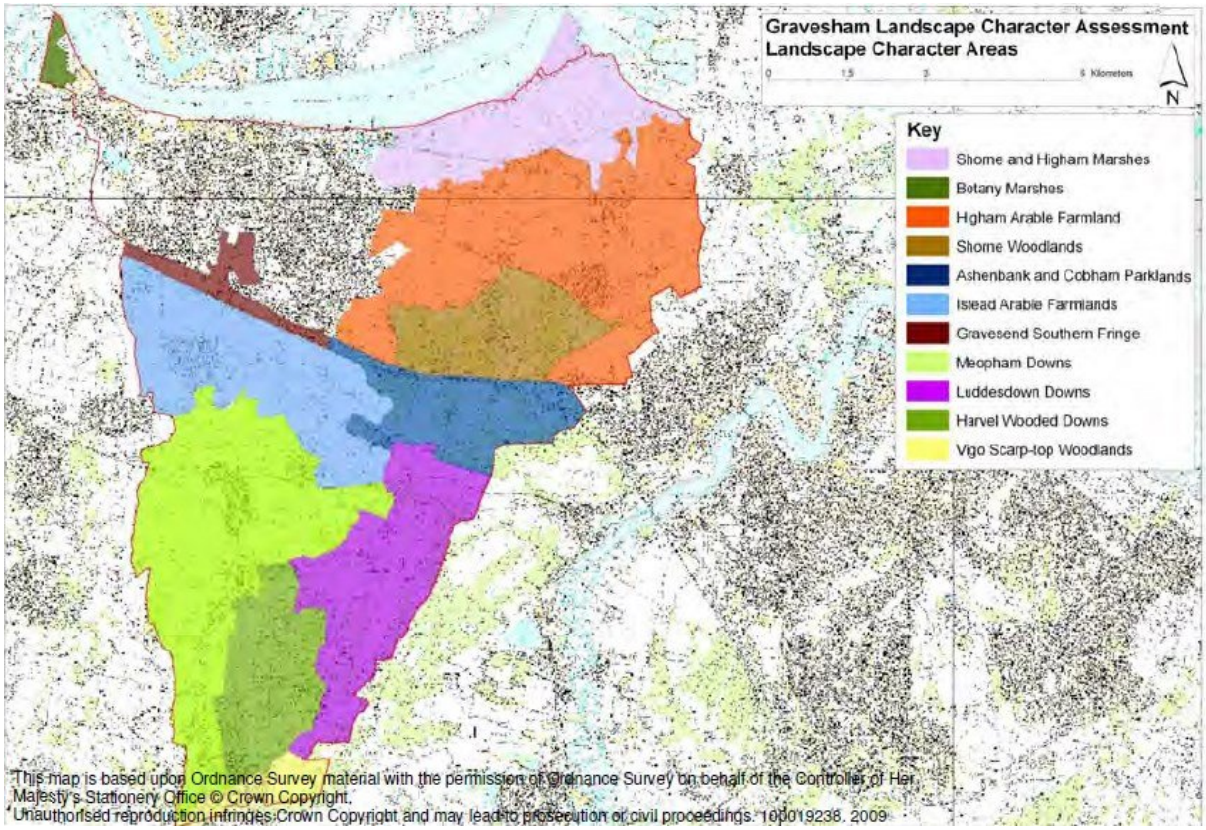
- **Conserve** - actions that encourage the conservation of distinctive features and features in good condition.
- **Conserve and reinforce** - actions that conserve distinctive features and features in good condition and strengthen and reinforce those features that may be vulnerable.
- **Reinforce** - actions that strengthen or reinforce distinctive features and patterns in the landscape.
- **Conserve and restore** - actions that encourage the conservation of distinctive features and features in good condition, whilst restoring elements or areas in poorer condition and removing or mitigating detracting features.
- **Conserve and create** - actions that conserve distinctive features and features in good condition, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.
- **Restore** - actions that encourage the restoration of distinctive landscape features and the removal or mitigation of detracting features.

- **Restore and create** - actions that restore distinctive features and the removal or mitigation of detracting features, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.
- **Reinforce and create** - actions that strengthen or reinforce distinctive features and patterns in the landscape, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.
- **Create** - actions that create new features or areas where existing elements are lost or in poor condition.

7.1.6. Please refer to the Gravesham Landscape Character Appraisal (2009) itself for more detail on each area and the recommendations.

7.1.7. The plan reproduced below identifies the locations of each of the individual landscape character areas.

Fig 26: Gravesham Landscape Character Areas


Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment
Landscape Character Areas
0
1.5
3
6 Kilometers
N
Key
Shorne and Higham Marshes
Botany Marshes
Higham Arable Farmland
Shorne Woodlands
Ashenbank and Cobham Parklands
Istead Arable Farmlands
Gravesend Southern Fringe
Meopham Downs
Luddesdown Downs
Harvel Wooded Downs
Vigo Scarp-top Woodlands
This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright.
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7.1.8. The Gravesham Landscape Character Appraisal (2009) should not be considered in isolation given that preservation or enhancement of landscape is only one consideration and other priorities may prevail – including the need to accommodate development in sustainable ways. A more fined grained appraisal has therefore been undertaken on landscape sensitivity and the ability to accommodate development around settlements. The Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2016) is available at

https://localplan.gravesham.gov.uk/consult.ti/sareg18/consultationHome . This is separate from work in relation to Green Belt, which has regard to differing considerations.

7.1.9. In addition to the above, the Kent Downs AoNB units has undertaken work on landscape appraisal for areas within its remit, with the Gravesham parts of the AoNB falling within the West Kent Downs zone. For information on the AoNB, their management plan and other associated guidance see: https://www.kentdowns.org.uk/

7.1.10. The character of rural settlements within Gravesham was considered under the Gravesham Townscape Assessment (2008) at : http://selfservice.gravesham.gov.uk:8081/webdocs/Environment%20and%20Planning/GLP/HER-02_Gravesham_Townscape_Appraisal_June_2008.pdf

7.1.11. As with the landscape appraisal work, recommendations are made regarding actions based on condition and sensitivity.

7.1.12. The larger rural settlements are 'inset' from the Green Belt on the adopted Policies Map, whereas the smaller ones and outlying areas are 'washed over'. The settlements have different characters and heritage background depending on their origin, subsequent development and context. It is not possible within this paper to provide a detailed appraisal of each and the reader is directed to the 2008 Assessment for a fuller commentary. The following list provides brief descriptions, the relevant page numbers from the 2008 Assessment and details of any conservation areas contained within them. It should be noted that there are also Conservation Areas in more remote rural locations and these are referred to separately.

7.1.13. The following settlement descriptions are taken from the Gravesham Local Plan 1st Review (1994) and have been subject to minor updating to reflect the passage of time:

- **Cobham:** Cobham is a traditional Kent village with Dickensian associations. Lying to the south of the A2 trunk road and being wholly within a designated Conservation Area, it remains largely unspoilt by modern residential estate development. The village core around the Church, Cobham College and The Olde Leather Bottle is particularly attractive. The heritage significance of the village should be understood in the context of the influence of the Cobham Hall Estate with which it had a strong connection. (Townscape Assessment: pages 61 – 69. Recommended action: conserve)
- **Sole Street:** Forms part of the Parish of Cobham but is separate from the village itself. The settlement is largely a modern residential settlement in a pleasant rural location, with limited local facilities other than the railway station. This provides relatively easy access to the Medway Towns and London Victoria but the frequency of service has been reduced in recent years. A tendency for residential development to spread along country lanes threatens the rural character of the locality as does the potential for rat-running traffic. There is an older-pre war core along the road called Sole Street and part of Round Street, where plots tend to be generous and more verdant. (Townscape Assessment: pages 123 – 139. Recommended action: conserve and reinforce)
- **Higham Upshire:** The settlement lies to the east of Gravesend and is located on relatively high ground to the west of Telegraph Hill. The settlement has historic connections with

Charles Dickens, who lived at Gads Hill House until his death in 1870. The main part of the settlement lies to the north side of the Gravesend/Rochester Road and has a regular bus services between these two areas. The settlement enjoys a range of facilities close to the village centre including a parade of shops, public house and doctor's surgery. (Townscape Assessment: pages 78 – 86. Recommended action: conserve and reinforce)

- **Lower Higham:** The settlement occupies lower terrain to the north of Higham Upshire and straddles the North Kent railway line and part of the disused Thames and Medway Canal. The settlement has few facilities except for a primary school which lies to the south between it and Higham Upshire. Local public houses and a small shop/post office north of the railway have been lost in recent years. The availability of rail travel from Higham Station to Gravesend, London and the Medway towns has attracted residential growth in the past. Canal Road Higham provides access to the Network Rail yard at Hoo junction and the Nuralite/Beckley Hill Works sites, resulting in HGV movements through the settlement. (Townscape Assessment: pages 96 – 113. Recommended action: Conserve and enhance)
- **Three Crutches:** The settlement is a small residential outlier on the north side of the A2/M2 on the edge of the Medway urban area. The Wainscott Northern Bypass (A289) lies to the west dividing this area from the rest of Higham, with access only available via Crutches Lane and the A226. Its northern and western surroundings are essentially agricultural, bounded by the main road network. (Townscape Assessment: not assessed)
- **Culverstone Green:** The settlement lies east of the Wrotham Road (A227), to the south of Meopham. It mainly consists of modern development. Recent residential growth has spread eastwards along Willow Walk but more particularly along Whitepost Lane, making the settlement rather straggly in form. The pattern of growth has been piecemeal and local facilities are scattered, except for a shop and petrol station/store on Wrotham Road itself. Outside the settlement boundary to the north and east lies the Culverstone Valley area, a relatively verdant area of more sporadic development that has evolved from pre-war plotlands. (Townscape Assessment: pages 70 – 77. Recommended action: conserve and reinforce).
- **Hook Green:** Hook Green is an attractive residential location straddling the Gravesend Wrotham Road, with a range of local facilities including two local shopping areas and a railway station with relatively good peak and off-peak services to London Victoria and the Medway Towns. The historic core of the settlement is Hook Green itself, with C19th development close to the station. There is a primary school and the local secondary school + doctors surgey lies to the south within the Green Belt close to the Meopham Green inset settlement. A bus service (306/308) provides limited but regular access to the Gravesend Town Centre northwards and Borough Green/Sevenoaks southwards. (Townscape Assessment: Page 105 – 113. Recommended action: conserve and reinforce)
- **Meopham Green:** The historic village green lies around 1.5 km south of Hook Green, with a largely post-war residential development centred of Cheyne Walk and Meopham School lying in between. A green gap of around 650 metres between Longfield Road and The Street separates the two settlements, with the parish church and hall and Meopham Court lying between them. Meopham Green itself is picturesque and an historic venue for village cricket, it has a number of public houses and a windmill at its south-west corner used as the parish offices. It is served by the same bus service running between Gravesend, Borough

Green and Sevenoaks as the other settlements on the A227 Wrotham Road. There are few other facilities, with the closest parade of local shops being at the southern end of Hook Green, Meopham. (Townscape Assessment: Page 105 – 113. Recommended action: conserve and reinforce))

- **Vigo Village:** The village, on top of the Downs and at the southern extremity of Gravesham, is an example of modern village planning built on the site of a disused WWII army camp. It integrates residential estate layout and existing woodland to create a verdant environment. Pedestrian and vehicular movement is segregated by a system of footpaths focusing on the primary school and small local shopping centre and public house. From a driving viewpoint, the layout is not particularly legible and the area is difficult to navigate unless known. It is served by the same bus service as other settlements along the A227 Wrotham Road running between Gravesend, Borough Green and Sevenoaks. (Townscape Appraisal: pages 131 – 139. Recommended action: conserve and enhance).
- **Lower Shorne:** The settlement is a small compact residential area of inter-war origins, on the north side of the A226 Gravesend/Rochester Road. It contains none of the facilities normally expected of a village, with the closest facilities being located within Shorne Village itself around 500 metres to the south. Whilst the distance is walkable, it requires crossing the main A226 and walking up the hill. Lower Shore is served by a regular bus service running between Gravesend and the Medway Towns. (Townscape Appraisal: pages 114 – 122. Recommended action: conserve)
- **Shorne:** The rural settlement of Shorne is one of Kent's traditional villages nestling in the folds of the countryside to the south of the A226 Gravesend/Rochester Road. It enjoys many features worthy of conservation, including a fine parish church and other buildings. There are a number of facilities available in the settlement or on its edge, including a primary school, doctor's surgery, parish hall, public house but limited shops. Bus services are largely limited to those running along the A226 Rochester Road between Gravesend and Rochester to the north. (Townscape Appraisal: pages 114 – 122. Recommended action: conserve)
- **Shorne Ridgeway:** The settlement, to the south of Shorne village, is something of a residential outlier of varying density, centred on the junction of Tanyard Hill and The Ridgeway. The latter is a well used route between the A2 trunk road and the Gravesend/Rochester Road at Higham Upshire. The core of the settlement around Tanyard Hill/The Ridgeway is designated a Conservation Area but development beyond this is more sporadic and of a different character and not considered to lie within the inset settlement. (Townscape Appraisal: pages 114 – 122. Recommended action: conserve)
- **Istead Rise:** The settlement has inter-war origins but since the 1950s and prior to the extension of the Green Belt in the late 1960s has become a large residential estate located in the rural area south of Gravesend that once formed part of the former Northfleet Urban District. It has a good range of community and local shopping facilities and is served by the same bus service between Gravesend, Borough Green and Sevenoaks as other settlements lying along the A227 Wrotham Road. (Townscape Appraisal: pages 87 – 95. Recommended action: conserve and enhance).

7.1.14. As noted above, there are a number of Conservation Areas within the rural area, some of which form the core of the settlements listed above, although there are three in more isolated

locations. Detailed appraisals and action plans in relation to these Conservation Areas are available at: https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/heritage-and-conservation/conservation-areas

7.1.15. The relevant Conservation Areas are:

- Chestnut Green (Shorne)
- Church Street (Higham parish but in isolated location to north)
- Cobham (Cobham village)
- Harvel (small settlement within Meopham parish)
- Hook Green (Meopham)
- Lower Higham (Higham)
- Meopham Green (Meopham)
- The Street (Meopham)
- Queens Farm (centred around a farm in Shorne parish close to marshes)
- Shorne (Shorne village)
- Thong (small settlement within Shorne parish close to urban area)

7.1.16. There are also important designated heritage assets and archaeological sites within the rural area which can be identified through the Kent Historic Environment (Kent HERS) at https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/SingleResult.aspx?uid=TKE1046 and/or by undertaking a map search on the Historic England listing website at https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/ .

7.1.17. The development of the rural area and its individual settlements is too complex to detail in this this paper but is clear that some areas have changed greatly over time whereas other are at risk, particularly from major infrastructure projects such as the proposed Lower Thames Crossing. This is not to say that the countryside does not change over time in response to differing factors, whether they are social, economic, political, technological or environmental.

7.1.18. The rural area in and around the borough would have been very different 100 – 150 years ago as is demonstrated by looking a map evidence from the late C18th onwards. The way in which people worked the land, the crops grown and the amount of animals in the landscape would have been very different. Whilst it is possible to look at this at a parish level from records maintained in the National Archives, it is more difficult at an individual farm or estate level – although some records do exist.

7.1.19. One particular part of the rural area, the North Kent Marshes, is largely protected not because of its landscape interest but because of biodiversity (Ramsar/SPA/SSSI etc). However, whilst it is not a designated landscape in the same way as the Kent Downs AoNB, this does not mean that it is unimportant in landscape terms with its wide open skies and connections with Charles Dickens. Landscape features are also of heritage interest, given the first sea defences here appear to have been erected from the 1250s onwards. The system of marshland ditches that drain the land and maintain water levels are also of great age in some

cases being identifiable in maps made by the Commissioners of Sewers in the 1690s available at the Kent Archives Office[18].

7.1.20. This is not to say that there has not been change. The construction of the Thames and Medway Canal; North Kent and Hundred of Hoo railway lines; and even the enclosure of common grazing land at Shorne Mead to build military defences have all left their mark. However, fundamental features in the landscape remain, including the patterns of fields and common land around Higham Church Street that would once have been associated with the priory and the route to the former ferry across the Thames. These patterns are evident in the plans mentioned above from the 1690s, are recognisable in the mid C19th tithe map of the parish, and still form an important element in defining the extent of the Higham Church Street Conservation Area today. Much of the land remains in the ownership of St Johns College, Cambridge which acquired it on the dissolution of the priory under Henry VIII in the 1530s.

Fig 27: Northern part of the Higham parish in the 1840s

Source: Sketch taken from Higham Tithe Map 1841. Original at Kent Archives.

[18] See Kent Archives references SN/K P3 (Gravesend to Shorne); SN/K P4 Higham Level

7.1.21. In terms of threats from major infrastructure, the current proposals for the Lower Thames Crossing would cause substantial harm to both landscape and heritage assets on the eastern side of the borough – particularly along the A2 corridor and around the historic hamlet of Thong.

7.1.22. The sensitivity of this area to such drastic change has been underestimated. Aside from the more ancient history of the area, from the late C17th onwards it became synonymous with the establishment of the Cobham Hall estate and the connection with the Darnley family. Such was the power and prestige of the family that the estate grew to encompass a broad swathe of land stretching from Cuxton on the Medway to the east and Chalk on the Thames to the west. The Darnley's also had significant landholdings in Gravesend and Milton, where in the 1830s they began to promote the Milton Park Estate scheme (Harmer Street etc).

7.1.23. This was very much a managed landscape centred on Cobham Hall and it's fine Repton designed park; surrounded by woodlands as part of it's setting, for income from timber and underwood sales; and for sporting rights; with tenanted farms beyond the woodlands from which both income and fealty were drawn. Lodge Farm was effectively maintained as the Home Farm of Cobham Hall during this period, with key employees and estate workers housed across the estate – including at Thong where Lord Darnley's estate manager lived at Thong House, opposite one of his main tenants at Cheneys Farm.

7.1.24. The Darnleys were a powerful family at Court and would have often have made the journey from London to their country seat at Cobham, travelling by river to Gravesend then towards Cobham along the old road between Gravesend and Thong – with the latter effectively being the hamlet at the gates to the main estate at Thong Lodge (c.1810). The plan below shows the area in the 1790s.

Fig 28: Plan of Cobham/Thong area in the 1790s

Source: British Library on-line images at http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/c/zoomify82582.html

7.1.25. In terms of the Council's approach to impacts on heritage and character in the rural area, consideration is still being given as to how development needs will be met. If the levels of development required by Government cannot be met within the urban area or settlements inset from the Green Belt in the rural, then consideration would have to be given to Green Belt release following due process as set out by Government in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.

7.1.26. Should Green Belt release be needed to meet development needs in these circumstances and it is concluded in accordance with NPPF paragraph 11 that policies contained in the Framework do not provide a sufficiently strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan, then further consideration will be given to impacts on heritage, settlement character and possible mitigation in making final site selections. Where development is considered within rural settlements inset from the Green Belt, impact on settlement character will also be a consideration.

8. GRAVESHAM'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND WIDER HERITAGE CONNECTIONS

8.1.1. People make history but not under the conditions of their own choosing. What we see today in terms of the heritage legacy and character of Gravesham is largely the result of actions of people in what may be seen as the distant past. But people continue to make changes and add to the built and natural environment around them. There are also lots of things that people do that do not actually make a mark on the physical environment but are equally important in terms of understand why places are as they are and how they functioned in the past. These add to the significance of places and features and how we understand and appreciate them.

8.1.2. In the post war period, the population profile of Gravesham has changed – not only has that population become larger it has also become far more diverse. The 2011 Census indicated that 82.8% of the population of Gravesham was white, whilst 17.2% came from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds. Of the latter, the largest group was Indian at 7.4% of the population. The Sikh community in Gravesham has perhaps had the greatest impact in terms of the diversity of the town, with a concentration in a number of the more central urban wards. This has occurred in a context of extremely good relations between the different communities and an understanding of cultural differences that has enriched the borough.

8.1.3. As a result, the town now has a iconic building that contributes in terms of heritage and character – the Siri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara. An image of the Gurdwara is reproduced below whilst others of the exterior and interior are on the architect's (Calfordseadon Partnership) website at https://calfordseaden.com/project/sri-guru-nanak-darbar-gurdwara/

Fig 29: The Siri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara

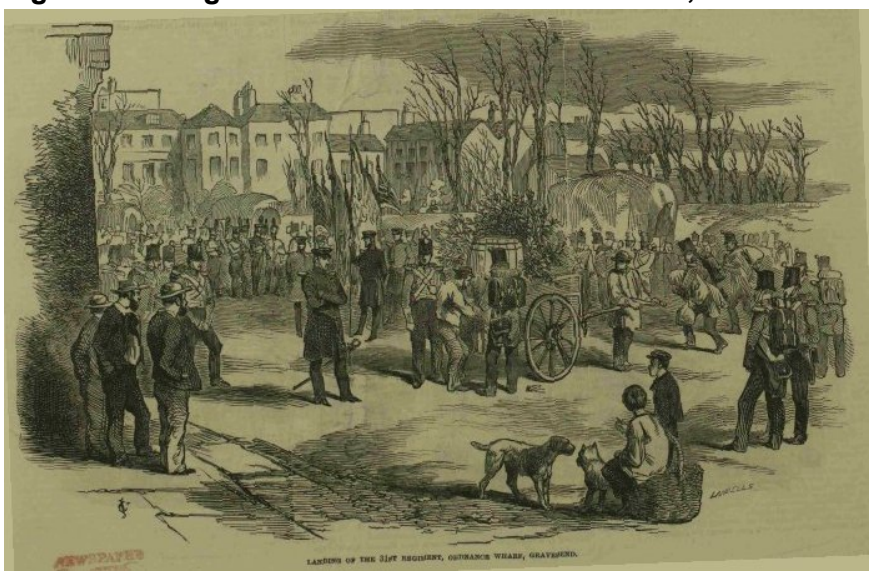
8.1.4. However, it is important to reflect on the fact that Gravesend was an important port town for centuries and has connections with places all over the world, some of which relate to its role as an out-port of London during the imperialist expansion of the British Empire.

8.1.5. In this respect, Gravesend has very strong connections with India because the East India Company was partly based in the town and it was from here that most of their ships sailed carrying both Government and company troops and to which they subsequently returned. For example, of the 37 East India Company ships that sailed to India in 1853, 29 left from Gravesend carrying 137 officers, 2,779 government troops and 2,273 East India Company troops.[19]

8.1.6. The point of departure and arrival of these troops appears to have been the Ordnance Wharf and yard to the side of the Customs House (Grade II listed) on The Terrace, constructed on the site of the former Fountain Tavern in 1815. This adds to the significance of this building in historic terms and provides a point of shared heritage between the indigenous and Indian communities.

8.1.7. For example, in December 1846, the 31st Regiment of Foot returned from India after 21 years bringing with them the captured colours of the Sikh army taken during the first Anglo-Sikh War. These were landed at the Ordnance Wharf before the troops marched to Brompton Barracks (then East India Company) at Chatham following the Thames and Medway Canal. It is understood that these may be the same colours that are hung in Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire.

Fig 30: Landing of the Sikh colours at Gravesend, December 1846



Source: Illustrated London News 19 December 1846

[19] See Appendix to the Report from the Select Committee on the Transport Service. British Parliamentary Papers 1860 vol XVIII

8.1.8. Gravesend's maritime links to the rest of the World are far greater than the connection with India noted above in that thousands of people left here as emigrants aboard ships in the C19th. The reasons for emigration were numerous but for a significant proportion it was poverty. Poor Law Unions often financed the costs of emigration for whole families as this was cheaper long-term than keeping them in their area. In Malthusian terms, they were simply seen as surplus population. Others emigrated for more idealistic reasons and to find a better way of life. Amongst these were the so-called Canterbury Colonists, followers of the writer Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who sailed from Gravesend in September 1850 to found Christchurch in New Zealand.

8.1.9. The emigrants had their farewell celebrations on what is now the Riverside Leisure Area, alongside the New Tavern Fort before embarking on what have become known as the 'First Four Ships' (Randolph; Cressy; Sir George Seymour; and Charlotte Jane). Once again, this adds considerable additional significance to the heritage value of this area and the town in general.

Fig 31: Farewell celebrations of the Canterbury Colonists, September 1850

Source: Illustrated London News, 7th September 1850

8.1.10. The above examples are intended to provide an indication of the heritage of Gravesend in particular and its wider connections that are not immediately apparent from simply considering what has survived on the ground. There is much more to explore.

9. NEXT STEPS

9.1.1. Issues relating to heritage and character are complex but will be considered in line with national policy; Historic England and other guidance; and with the approach set out above in this paper, having regard to the need to accommodate development is a sustainable way. Where cross-boundary issues are considered to arise, these will be discussed with the relevant parties as appropriate. Where further work is required, this will be commissioned or undertaken as necessary in discussion with key stakeholders prior to the next round of public consultation.

10. APPENDIX: LIST OF USEFUL LINKS TO FURTHER INFORMATION

The above text contains a list of links to useful information in respect of heritage assets in particular and these have been drawn together here for ease of reference.

Archaeology and Historic Environment

Kent Historic Environment Record (Kent HERS):
https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/SingleResult.aspx?uid=TKE1046

Archaeology in Historic Towns (July 2006) was adopted by the Council as a pre-existing KCC document having the weight of a Supplementary Planning Document in 2014 alongside the Core Strategy. Whilst this identifies areas of archaeological interest in Gravesend and Northfleet, it is now dated and reference should also be made to the Kent HERS – see https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/99299/SPG3-Archaeology-in-Historic-Towns-July-2006.pdf

Unpublished archaeological fieldwork reports can also be explored at https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/greylit/query.cfm

The **Kent Archaeological Society** website (along with articles from its journal Archaeologia Cantiana) is available at https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Pub/ArchCant/Intro.htm

For information in relation to the **Shorne Woods Archaeology Group** and the **Cobham Historic Landscape Project** see http://shornewoodsarchaeology.co.uk/

Designated Heritage Assets

Designated Heritage Assets comprise:

- World Heritage Sites
- Scheduled Monuments
- Listed Buildings (Grades 1, II and II*)
- Conservation Areas
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Registered Battlefields
- Protected Wreck Sites

The majority of heritage assets can be identified through the Kent HERS website above but for full details of the main statutorily designated ones (except Conservation Areas) see the Historic England listing website (which also has a map search facility) at https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/

There is currently one **Building at Risk** on the Historic England register, this being The Dairy at Cobham Hall (Grade II* listed) but this has recently been restored by the Landmark Trust as a holiday

let and the Council antipates that it will be removed from the register in due course. See https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/48211

There are 23 **Conservation Areas** which have been designated by the Council under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In a number of these areas Article 4 Directions have been applied which further restrict permitted development rights to help preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest for which they were designated.

The designated Gravesham Conservation Areas are:

- Chestnut Green, Shorne
- Church Street, Higham
- Cobham
- Darnley Road
- Harvel
- Harmer Street
- High Street
- Hook Green, Meopham
- King Street, Gravesend
- Lansdowne Square, Northfleet
- Lower Higham
- Meopham Green
- The Street, Meopham
- The Overcliffe, Gravesend
- Pelham Road and The Avenue, Gravesend
- Queens Farm, Shorne
- The Hill, Northfleet
- Thong, Shorne
- Upper Windmill Street, Gravesend
- Windmill Hill, Gravesend.

For information on all of the above, the controls that apply and any supplementary guidance, see the Council website at https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/heritage-and-conservation/conservation-areas

Non-designated Heritage Assets

The Council does not currently maintain a Local List but will consider compiling one should resources become available. In the interim, consideration is given as to whether buildings or features should be treated as such on a case-by-case basis.